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The University of San Francisco

COOPERATING TEACHERS: AN INVESTIGATION INTO THEIR NEEDS
AND TRAINING AS MENTORS AND SUPERVISORS
OF STUDENT TEACHERS

A Dissertation Presented

to

The Faculty of the School of Education

Learning and Instruction Department

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education

by

Joy Hamilton

San Francisco

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ABSTRACT

Cooperating Teachers: An Investigation into Their Needs and Training as Mentors and Supervisors of Student Teachers

The purpose of this qualitative study was to examine (a) the role of the cooperating teacher in relationship to his or her assigned student teachers, (b) the cooperating teachers' training and preparation for those roles, and (c) the cooperating teachers' perceived needs regarding training and support. Ten cooperating teachers from different elementary schools in the San Francisco Bay Area participated in the study. Half of the cooperating teachers had student teachers from a local branch of a state university, and the other half hosted student teachers from a private university. The study included one-on-one interviews with cooperating teachers who worked with student teachers in the Spring or Fall semesters of 2009.

The results of the data analysis and the emergent themes indicated that cooperating teachers perceived that their roles in relationship to their student teachers were to reflect, encourage, support, observe, evaluate, and provide experiences that bridge pedagogy to practice. The cooperating teachers reported that they lacked training for these roles and relied on their own teaching experience. Cooperating teachers suggested training and support needs as more university engagement, classes, prescreening and selection of practicum partners, reimbursement, and guidelines for pacing during the semester with the student teacher. The cooperating teachers perceived a lack of university support but agreed that information packets were provided at the onset of the practicum and conferences with the university supervisor and student teacher took place. The cooperating teachers reported transformations in their own teaching practices during the practicum experience through collaborative interactions and personal

relationships with their student teachers and exposure to current educational practices and pedagogy.

The data analysis also suggested that cooperating teachers are selected in a variety of ways with little or no standardization of selection criteria and that they perform a wide-range of tasks for which they receive no training from the supervising university.

The State of California requires teacher-training programs to support and train cooperating teachers; however, at this time, cooperating teachers volunteer to host student teachers without receiving training, remuneration, or recognition. Results of the interviews suggest a need to standardize the cooperating teacher selection and training process and provide a minimum level of training and support as student teachers prepare to enter the teaching profession.

This dissertation, written under the direction of the candidate's dissertation committee and approved by the members of the committee, has been presented to and accepted by the Faculty \of the School of Education in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education. The content and research methodologies presented in this work represent the work of the candidate alone.

<u>Joy L Hamilton</u>	<u>May 12, 2010</u>
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

Statement of the Problem

The student teaching practicum, when student teachers are in classrooms working with cooperating teachers, is the culminating event in a new teacher's formal education that shapes the beginning of his or her teaching career (Anderson, 2007). Little is known, however, about the ways in which cooperating teachers influence or change teaching actions, intentions, beliefs, or perspectives of student teachers. Even less is known about the training of cooperating teachers to prepare them for the role of mentor, role model, reflective listener, or supervisor (Anderson).

Student teaching first appeared in the literature at the beginning of the 20th century, with one-third of teachers participating in a practicum experience by 1920 (Veal & Rickard, 1998). Prior to World War II, student teaching took place primarily in laboratory schools on university campuses (Baumgartner, Koerner, & Rust, 1992). Since then, the student teaching practicum, or field service experience, has become the standard for teacher education students in the United States.

Student teaching along with undergraduate education classes comprise the requirements for a degree in education (State of California Commission of Teacher Credentialing, 2007). Classroom teachers receive credentials by combining course work and on-the-job training. Multiple-subject (elementary school teachers) and single-subject (high school teachers) credentials have separate and distinct requirements. These requirements vary from state to state. In California, an elementary school teacher receives a preliminary credential when the applicant satisfies the following requirements: (a)

completes of a baccalaureate degree from an accredited university or college, (b) receives passing grades in an accredited teacher preparation program, and (c) passes RICA (Reading Instruction Competence Assessment), CSET (California Subject Examinations for Teachers), CBEST (California Basic Educational Skills Test) examinations and a Teaching Performance assessment. Teachers also must obtain a negative tuberculosis test, complete Infant Child Adult CPR (Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation), complete a U.S. Constitution course, and obtain a Certificate of Clearance (State of California Commission of Teacher Credentialing, 2007).

In order to receive a California clear multiple-subject credential, individuals must be employed as a teacher, complete an approved Professional Teacher Induction Program through a school district, county office, or university. Cooperating teachers, those who host student teachers for their practicum, must have a clear credential, have taught for 3 years, and must be working in their credentialed areas (State of California Commission of Teacher Credentialing, 2007). Although there is training for the California State teacher induction program, Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment (BTSA), there are no such specific requirements for training of cooperating teachers. The state of California does require universities to enable cooperating teachers

to complete, as needed, planned professional training to develop their understanding of the developmental progression of beginning teachers; the Teaching Performance Expectations for Preliminary Teaching Credentials; state-adopted academic content standards for students; theory-practice relationships in the program's curriculum; and effective professional communication with student teachers and intern teachers. (CTC, 2007, p. 1)

Because the requirements state “as needed” but are not specific as to how “as needed” is determined, it is not clear how cooperating teachers can be enabled to complete professional training or assistance in defining and performing their supervisory

responsibilities. The State of California Commission of Teacher Credentialing (2007) is not specific either about any requirements for cooperating teachers beyond having 3 years of experience and a clear credential. Therefore, universities and colleges must decide how to prepare cooperating teachers and determine what their training and support needs are.

Training of cooperating teachers provides an opportunity for exemplary classroom teachers to learn how to work with adult learners in a supervisory capacity within their own classroom structures. It is not automatic that great teachers become great teachers of teachers without some help (Heller, 2004). Zeichner (2005) addressed the assumption that educating teachers does not require any additional preparation beyond the expertise already achieved through exemplary teaching of elementary school students. Zeichner (2005) stated that, although there are similarities in teaching children and in teaching adults, there are ways in which the two kinds of teaching differ and where one's expertise as a teacher does not translate necessarily into expertise as a cooperating teacher and working with adult learners. No specific structure or training is offered to cooperating teachers who supervise and evaluate student teachers within the classroom (Zeichner, 2005). Although cooperating teachers may be exemplary classroom teachers, that ability does not qualify them necessarily to be competent and at ease with adult learners in the classroom in the form of student teachers (Heller, 2004).

The cooperating teacher is usually a local school-district employee, a volunteer in the student teaching program, and often untrained and ill prepared for their supervisory role (Giebelhaus & Bowman, 2002). Various student teaching programs acknowledge the additional layer of time and support added to the cooperating teacher's regular workload by offering monetary incentives. In some circumstances, universities award teachers

stipends (Private University grants \$150 per assignment not to exceed \$600 in a year), and some universities offer a one unit reduction in tuition (for courses of their choice) for cooperating teachers who elect to take classes but generally cooperating teachers receive little or no compensation.

Stanulis (1995) wrote that it is the classroom teachers who potentially exert the greatest influence on the development of the perspective teacher because of the close interaction that develops during the practice of teaching. Knowing the importance of the cooperating teacher in the student teaching experience, it is surprising that there is little research into their training or their needs.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine (a) the role of the cooperating teacher in relationship to his or her assigned student teachers, (b) the cooperating teachers' training and preparation for those roles, and (c) the cooperating teachers' perceived needs regarding training and support.

The study included a screening survey sent to all of the elementary school cooperating teachers partnered with student teachers from two Northern California universities in the 2009 Spring semester. This survey was used to obtain a subset of 10 cooperating teachers to complete a secondary, more detailed, personal interview. A set of standardized, open-ended questions was used to conduct interviews with the 10 cooperating teachers. A standardized open-ended interview protocol is defined as an interview protocol that requires carefully worded questions that adhere to a specific script (Patton, 2002, p. 344). Candidates were selected from cooperating teachers either currently working with student teachers or having worked with a student teacher within

the past year. For the purposes of this study, only elementary-school cooperating teachers were interviewed. I conducted one-hour, audio-taped interviews with each study participant and focused on cooperating teachers' preparation and training and perceived needs for support for training. Interviews took place outside of the working day and were held at a specified time and place chosen by the interviewee.

Background and Need

Historically the United States has undergone an evolutionary process regarding education, starting back in the 1770s with elitist education offered only to the privileged and wealthy through the late 1800s until the present, where compulsory education mandated regular attendance for all students from 6 to 17 years of age in most states with only slight variations (Lortie, 1975). Through these changes, teacher education and teacher training transitioned as well. In early US history, pedagogical content knowledge was a rare concept and teacher certification varied within and between states (Lortie, 1975). With the war on poverty and illiteracy, during the Johnson administration in the 1960s, more specialized teacher qualifications were required with increased emphasis on diversity and accountability judged by test measures (Lortie, 1975).

In some of the early literature about preservice education, criticisms were similar to those of today. Goodlad (1991) stated, "the most glaring disjuncture between theory and practice occurred at the point where students left the campus to engage in their student teaching experience" (p. 8). The student teaching practicum begins at a point of disjuncture. Student teachers often found that they had no opportunity to try what they had been learning and experienced a clash between campus theoretical learning and

classroom requirements of their mentor teachers who had little university interaction (Goodlad, 1991).

In 1976, Zeichner developed a series of graduate-level courses in teacher education that focused on supervision and mentoring teachers, preservice teacher education and teacher education policy issues, teacher professional development, and action research and reflective practices in teacher education. Zeichner (2005) also designed a 6-week workshop for prospective cooperating teachers that focused on issues of mentoring and assessing student teachers as well as literature on student teaching and learning to teach. In Wisconsin in 1976, there was a requirement that cooperating teachers who worked fulltime with student teachers or interns must have some preparation in supervision and mentoring to qualify with the state education department to be a cooperating teacher (Zeichner, 2005). Currently, in Wisconsin schools, there is a one-day orientation and training for new practicum and student teacher supervisors (Zeichner, 2005).

So, although the literature bears out the importance and influence of cooperating teachers on the students who practice the art of teaching in their elementary-school classrooms, these programs have been cut, abbreviated, or eliminated. Perhaps budget concerns are an issue in teacher training programs, but the need to create new programs, like BTSA, for teachers who graduate and have not been given adequate supervision is counterintuitive. Providing the best practicum experience in classrooms with trained cooperating teachers who are knowledgeable in theory as well as university requirements and expectations is paramount.

Throughout many recent changes in teacher education, one of the perspectives that has remained unchanged is John Dewey's model of apprenticeship, which states that one learns by doing and working alongside another, more veteran, teacher (Dewey, 1933). Dewey (1916) maintained that teacher preparation programs should develop the intellectual habits needed for mastery of practical skills before developing technical proficiency.

For Dewey, the supreme mark of the teacher is the ability to interpret and activate students' motivational and intellectual processes. To do this, teachers need the capacity to see what is going on in the minds of their students and to figure out how to engage them in worthwhile learning. If student teachers are faced with the challenge of managing a class before they become students of subject matter and learning, they will develop teaching habits on the basis of 'what works' to maintain order rather than what pupils need to move their learning forward. (Feiman-Nemser, 2007, p. 702)

The apprenticeship model is still an integral part of teacher education programs.

The student teaching practicum is the last chance to master curriculum and put theory into practice. Yet, little has been done to assure that student teachers are placed with cooperating teachers who are trained in adult learning theory or have qualifications beyond certification to teach in elementary schools. Zeichner (2005) wrote that the model of assigning teachers to mentor teachers without formal training for that role or ongoing support is based on an assumption that "educating teachers is something that does not require any additional preparation and that if one is a good teacher of elementary or secondary students, this expertise will automatically carry over to one's work with novice teachers" (p. 118). Zeichner continued stating that

Anyone who has ever worked with prospective teachers knows that although there are some similarities in teaching children and young adolescents and teaching adults, there are important ways in which the two kinds of teaching differ and where one's expertise as a teacher does not necessarily translate into expertise as a mentor of teachers. (p. 118)

In the traditional student teaching model, there is an established triad consisting of a student teacher, a cooperating teacher, and a university or college supervisor. The student teacher is a university or college student usually taking student teaching as a practicum at the end of his or her formal teacher education program, whereas the supervisor is an employee of the university with specific contractual requirements regarding responsibilities. Although the student teacher and university supervisor are affiliated directly with the university and are under the guidelines and auspices of that governing body, the cooperating teacher neither is a university employee nor has any direct obligations to the university. Cooperating teachers have a powerful influence on the student teaching experience and ultimately beginning teacher success (Anderson, 2007; Berliner, 2005; Clark, 2002; McGunn, 2003; Wilson, Floden, & Ferrini-Mundy, 2002). The cooperating teacher in practicum placements rarely is subject to the same criterion selection as teacher educators. Cooperating teachers are often selected on a volunteer basis, and factors such as availability, location, or grade level are used as selection criteria (Sudzina, Giebelhaus, & Coolican, 1997).

The development of criteria to select and assign cooperating teachers to student teachers needs to be based on training, content and pedagogical knowledge, mentoring skills, and exemplary teaching. One study found that cooperating teachers were acknowledged first as teachers of children and second as teacher educators. The student teachers in the Koerner and Rust study (2002) had no further expectation of the cooperating teachers than to make the room accessible and work with them in collegial and supportive ways. In the discussion section of the Koerner and Rust study, moving beyond day-to-day supervision to a deeper analysis of links between pedagogy in teacher

preparation programs and field work in classrooms needs to become a goal for the purpose of improving student learning (Koerner & Rust, 2002). Surface learning is not the goal for elementary students or the novice teachers preparing to teach them.

Investing in the training of cooperating teachers is necessary to successful practicum experiences for both student teachers and cooperating teachers. Researchers like Bullough and Draper (2004) have begun to examine student teachers who fail student teaching and the circumstances surrounding that failure. Based on assumptions by teacher preparation programs that cooperating teachers will act as mentors to student teachers and assist them in translating theory into practice, many misunderstandings and subsequent problems can occur. Teacher pairs should enter the teaching partnership with expectations explicitly detailed. To avoid misunderstandings, cooperating teachers should be prepared adequately (Bullough & Draper, 2004). Few cooperating teachers receive training or support beyond written materials or a single orientation session. This lack of training results in student teachers working with cooperating teachers who are not familiar with the teacher education program knowledge base and goals and are unable to link theory presented in campus courses with classroom practices (Bullough, 2005). If training and orientation for cooperating teachers is insufficient, cooperating teachers may have unrealistic expectations for student teaching performance and may be tentative about the feedback they give to the developing professionals under their guidance (Sudzina et al., 1997). Several options for cooperating teacher preparation can be developed creatively, but the inclusion of training is necessary to optimize the collaborative student teaching experience.

A mounting body of research has revealed that teacher expertise is a leading factor in the influence of student achievement (Darling-Hammond, 2001). Darling-Hammond (1999) also stated that there are “over two hundred studies illustrating the positive effects of teacher education” on student learning thus debunking the myth that “teachers are born not made.” This increase in concern for academic excellence, paired with the knowledge that teacher training and expertise make a difference, has led to interest in the preparation of teachers at the college and university level.

There has been a growing focus on the qualifications and quality of teachers in the 1990s in the United States (Ingersoll, 2001), and “a new consensus has emerged that teacher quality is one of the most, if not the most significant factor in students’ achievement and educational improvement” (Cochran-Smith, 2004, p. 3). When No Child Left Behind (NCLB) was signed in January 2002, its goal was to assure that all students would have certificated, “highly qualified teachers” in every classroom (Riggs & Sandlin, 2007). During this same time period, the US universities and colleges with teacher preparation programs struggled with supplying the growing demand for teachers, due to teacher retirement, class-size reduction, and retaining teachers in their early teaching years. One of the ways to increase teacher supply is to offer alternative routes to certification. Internships evolved where teachers with a bachelor degree are placed into classrooms and assigned mentors while they receive on the job training (Breux & Wong, 2003). Alternative credential programs and internships suggest that many teachers arrive in their classrooms without the benefit of cooperating teacher modeling, supervision, and mentoring.

“Mentors are not born, but developed through conscious, deliberate, ongoing learning” (Achinstein & Athanases, 2006, p. 3). No thoroughly designed and executed program exists at the teacher practicum level for cooperating teachers.

A current trend in teacher preparation programs is an emphasis on reflection and reflective practices. “Reflection is an essential element in learning, as an experience in itself does not automatically lead to the formation of new ideas” (McGunn, 2003, p. 143). McGunn connected student teaching to Dewey’s (1933) cycle of learning that is composed of these essential components: concrete experiences, reflection, formation of concepts and generalizations, and testing concepts in new situations. Cooperating teachers have a responsibility to help student teachers reflect on their strategies to develop their teaching abilities. Positive results show benefits by turning a practicum from an authoritative experience into a collaborative one. McGunn also noted that reflective practices take time, and it is the cooperating teacher’s responsibility to provide that time for reflection, if only for 10 minutes immediately following a lesson. Cooperating teachers need to be encouraged to provide reflection time in observations and discussions with student teachers and provide a safe environment for student teachers to engage in honest reflection by building trust and developing goals (McGunn). In busy classrooms, reflective time is often in short supply, and at many postobservation conferences, the cooperating teachers talk too much and provide too many recommendations rather than letting the student teachers reflect on lesson outcomes. Too often student teachers and cooperating teachers are more interested in defending practices than considering the validity of the observation (McGunn). Training, practice, and

valuing the benefits of reflection can become part of cooperating teachers mentoring preparation.

Around the world, the importance of education, on individual and societal success, has increased at a breathtaking pace as a new knowledge-based economy has emerged. Consequently, most countries have been engaged in intensive reforms of their education systems, and many have focused on improving teacher education, recognizing that preparing accomplished teachers who effectively can teach a wide array of learners to high standards is essential to economic and political survival (Darling-Hammond, 2005).

In the United States, this growing global and economic concern has led to reforms in education, the development of teaching standards, and the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act passed by Congress in 2001 (Darling-Hammond, 2005). NCLB requires schools to employ only “highly qualified teachers,” meaning those who hold at least a bachelor’s degree, demonstrate content knowledge, and meet all of the requirements of state certification (No Child Left Behind Act of 2001: Qualifications for Teachers and Professionals, 2004). Empirical evidence about the value teacher preparation adds to pupil’s scores on tests drives teacher training to ensure that all teachers have basic subject matter knowledge and technical skills to bring pupils’ test scores to minimum thresholds (Cochran-Smith, 2004).

California requires a Bachelor of Science or a Bachelor of Arts to become a credentialed teacher, whereas other states have the credential program embedded as an undergraduate function. During the fifth year of college in California, novice teachers are sent into classrooms to practice and implement the plans they have developed in their

content classes (California Commission on Teacher Credentialing, 2007). Student teaching is the culminating event that attempts to bridge academic coursework and the realities of the classroom (Kagan, 1992).

As student teachers are assigned to classrooms and cooperating teachers are selected, California sets a standard on which to base this process. The Commission on Teacher Credentialing sets requirements for teacher education programs and are specifically outlined in Common Standard 7; 2042 Program Standards 15 & 16 (CTC, 2009). Standard 15 requires universities to provide professional development for cooperating teachers that include Teaching Performance Expectations (TPEs) and information about responsibilities pertaining to supervision. Standard 15 also requires that cooperating teachers (a) are experienced and effective in supervising credential candidates; (b) know and understand current educational theory and practice, expectations for cooperating teachers, academic content standards and frameworks, and developmental learning stages; (c) model collegial supervisory practices that foster student teacher success; and (d) promote reflective practice. Cooperating teachers also are expected to provide opportunities for student teachers to work in diverse placements with English language learners, students with special needs, and student from low socioeconomic backgrounds. Standard 16 requires that the fieldwork experience, or student teaching, embeds multiple opportunities for student teachers to learn, apply, and reflect on each TPE (CTC, 2009). The cooperating teachers are expected to coach and assist appropriately student teachers so they satisfactorily can complete assignments (CTC, 2009). It is not clear how cooperating teachers are trained, but that it is required is stated explicitly.

This study focused on cooperating teachers: their roles, training, and needs as mentor, supervisor, reflective listener, and support provider. The study investigated what training, preparation, and support cooperating teachers perceive they need to fulfill these roles and responsibilities.

Theoretical Rationale

Student teachers are adult learners who are in classrooms with cooperating teachers trying to establish their own personal pedagogy and bridge theoretical knowledge into practical application. Student teachers use the practicum experience to blend their own personal classroom experience, their university theoretical knowledge, and their fledgling teaching experience into a personal teaching philosophy. Both Mezirow's (1991) transformative learning theory (TLT) and Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory and more specifically cognitive apprenticeship (Collins, Brown, & Newman, 1989) apply to the relationship between cooperating teachers and student teachers and the ways in which student teachers and cooperating teachers navigate their way through the practicum experience, reflecting about and discussing best teacher practices and student learning. Mezirow's (1991, 2000) transformative learning theory is based on a qualitative study of women returning to higher education and gives a unique view of literature on new teachers, professional development, and the process of learning how to teach.

Transformative Learning Theory (TLT)

The theoretical rationale for this study was based in part on Mezirow's (1991) TLT of adult learning and critical reflection. Mezirow introduced the concept of transformative learning in 1978, and, although it has evolved and been modified, it is a

complex description of how adult learners make sense of and interpret their experiences (Cranton, 1994, 1997). Mezirow (1991) stated “reflection enables us to correct distortions in our beliefs and errors in problem solving” (p. 1). Experience challenges one’s assumptions and the habits that form one’s frame of reference. Often cooperating teachers and student teachers differ in terms of age and generation designations and have been educated during different prevailing philosophies and perhaps have existing schema that may change as critical reflection and meaning occur through learning and experience (Glenn, 2006).

Mezirow’s theory has five propositions: (a) social reality is shared through communication, (b) socialization serves to interpret experience, (c) everyday life is an inevitable view of reality, (d) individuals construct knowledge through interactions with others, and (e) construction is intentional (Mezirow, 1991). The transformation of meaning perspectives (beliefs, attitudes, and emotional reactions) involves critical reflection of experiences. Critical reflection and rational discourse are processes of adult learning in which individuals prepare to make diverse decisions on their own (Mezirow, 1994). Perspective transformation is the process of becoming critically aware of how and why assumptions restrict views and feelings about the world, changing these structures of habit to change perspective, and then making choices and changes based on new views and understandings (Mezirow, 1991). Individuals’ cultural and contextual experiences are based on the totality of events in their lives and perspective transformation explains how individuals can change structures acquired over a lifetime (Taylor, 1998). An individual’s (cooperating teacher’s or student teacher’s) meaning structure will influence how he or she chooses to supervise or practice teaching.

Creating and changing meaning schema transforms the meaning of schema previously and routinely learned. Self-examination, critical assessment of assumptions, shared transformations, exploration of new jobs or actions, development of competence and self-confidence in new situations, and the reintegration of new perspectives all result from deconstructing beliefs and reconstructing new belief systems (Mezirow, 1995). Often transformative learning is triggered by a traumatic event, crisis, or life transition but can occur from an accumulation of transformations over time (Mezirow). Critical reflection of existing assumptions and beliefs is a primary way in which individuals change existing schema and redefine their world (Mezirow). Application of this theory to adults learning to teach or learning to teach teachers assists in the definition and application of new theories and practice and puts both the cooperating teacher and student teacher in a similar meaning construction challenge (Danielson, 2008).

Critical reflection is one means by which one works through beliefs and assumptions. It helps to talk to others not only exchanging opinions and ideas or receiving support and encouragement but also engaging in discussions where alternatives are considered seriously. Connected and relational learning emphasizes connected knowing rather than separate knowing and relationships among learners. Social change or social action is described as a goal of transformative learning and action happens in concert with reflection (Cranton, 1994).

When transformative learning is the goal of adult education, fostering a learning environment in which it can occur should be considered the role of the cooperating teacher. The teacher's role in establishing an environment that builds trust and care and facilitates the development of sensitive relationships among learners is a fundamental

principle of fostering transformative learning (Taylor, 1998). The goal is to create a community of individuals who are "united in a shared experience of trying to make meaning of their life experience" (Loughlin, 1993, pp. 320-321). The cooperating teacher also serves as a role model by himself or herself demonstrating a willingness to learn and change. An important part of transformative learning is for individuals to change their frames of reference by reflecting critically on their assumptions and beliefs and consciously making and implementing changes that bring about new ways of defining their roles (Taylor, 1998).

Sociocultural Theory and Cognitive Apprenticeship

The general term, Social Learning Theory, initiated by Vygotsky (1978) explained the role of the biological and social psychological development by a principle referred to as the general law of genetic development. This law states that cultural development occurs first on the social level, through words and interactions, and then on an internal level. Learners solve problems through communication and reflective conversations as well as specific activities and experiences (Vanderburg, 2006).

Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory "strove to prove that social interactions enable humans to develop advanced thoughts through repeated interactions with more experienced individuals in the community" (Vanderburg, 2006, p. 375). Vygotsky asserted that language is at the heart of interactions and is the vessel that holds and passes thoughts from one person to another. Learners actively construct knowledge and use their experiences to assign meaning to ideas and items (Moll, 1992). In 1916, Dewey laid the foundation for socially constructed meaning when he stressed the importance of the social aspect of learning. He asserted that as an individual shares in a discussion that the

individual learns from others and perceives things of which he or she would otherwise be ignorant.

Sociocultural theory emphasizes the interdependence of individual and social processes in knowledge construction (Vygotsky, 1978). Human activities take place in social contexts and are mediated by language. There is a natural interdependence between the individual and the social process of knowledge acquisition. Socially shared activities and collaborative conversations with more experienced learners enhance learning and depth of knowledge for both the novice and the more advanced learner (Ethell & McMeniman, 2002).

In a more specific theory that has its roots in sociocultural theory, cognitive apprenticeship (Collins et al., 1989), is closely linked to the type of learning that occurs between student teachers and their cooperating teachers. Cognitive apprenticeship involves an expert (cooperating teacher) providing experiences for a novice (student teacher) in a practical real-life setting (a classroom) by making the process of the task visible to the learner; putting tasks into context to understand the lesson's relevance, and diversifying the approach and articulating the process so that the student (or student teacher) can transfer and apply the knowledge and experiences to their own learning (Collins et al.).

Cognitive apprenticeship (Collins et al., 1989) can be identified throughout the student teaching experience as cooperating teachers provide their student teachers with situational tasks and assist their learning and knowledge application through conversations and reflections. As cooperating teachers and student teachers reflect on lessons and common experiences, they share the social aspects of learning and

constructing meaning from lessons and activities (Danielson, 2008). Cooperating teachers who may be very effective classroom practitioners may or may not be trained in effective listening and reflecting practices (Borko & Mayfield, 2000). Even though a teacher is excellent in the elementary-school classroom does not necessarily mean, he or she is experienced or effective with adult learners (Moore, 2000). Selection of cooperating teachers is not just a matter of choosing a qualified classroom teacher, but rather, assuring that the cooperating teacher has training to deal with issues and concerns that are, between adult learners, and their student teachers.

Student teacher candidates need consistent opportunities to apply what they are learning, discuss and analyze what happens during instruction, and reflect and transform their schema. Student teachers need to be involved in inquiry and reflection about learning, teaching, and curriculum as well as instruction in specific areas of content (Darling-Hammond & Baratz-Snowden, 2007). In order for that to happen most effectively, cooperating teachers need training and time to interact with the assigned student teachers. It is not surprising that cooperating teachers in the United States have limited training prior to the student teacher arriving. Teachers in the US have almost no in-school time for professional development or collegial work (Darling-Hammond, 2005). Nearly all professional development occurs in workshops or courses held after school, weekends, or during a small number of professional development days (Darling-Hammond, 2005).

Research Questions

The data from this study answered the following research questions:

1. What do cooperating teachers report is their role in the guidance and supervision of student teachers?
2. To what extent do cooperating teachers perceive they are prepared to address the needs of the student teaching practicum?
3. What do cooperating teachers perceive their needs are in respect to training and support?
4. What training and support do cooperating teachers report they receive regarding their role as cooperating teacher?
5. To what extent does working with a student teacher transform the teaching practices of the cooperating teacher?

Significance of the Study

This study of cooperating teachers is important because in the United States individuals value education and know the importance of the cooperating teacher's influence on the student teacher. "Teacher quality is the most powerful predictor of student success" (Minner, 2001, p. 33). "A skilled and knowledgeable teacher can make an enormous difference in how well students learn" (Olson, 2000, p. 12). "The teacher – and what the teacher knows and can do - is the determining factor in student achievement" (Breaux & Wong, 2003, p. 23). Educators want the most qualified and highly trained teachers mentoring and coaching novice teachers so that they have the best chance to affect student performance and learning in a positive way. There is a high attrition rate among beginning teachers, as high as 30% leave within the first 5 years, whereas inner-city teachers' exit rate is as high as 50%. High cost is correlated to high attrition rates in both human and material resources (Breaux & Wong, 2003). Merrow

(2003) likened losing teachers to a steady leak. He suggested the leak can be fixed by providing adequate training and support for beginning teachers, thus increasing the retention of more competent, qualified, and satisfied professionals in the Nation's schools.

This study examined cooperating teachers specifically. The need to learn more about the training of cooperating teachers in the important areas of transformative learning, reflective conversation, and interconnected dialogue is critical as the nation faces a need for almost a million new, highly qualified teachers due to increased enrollment in many regions of the United States, the retirement of baby boomer teachers, and programs to limit class sizes (Ganzer, 2002). Intentional training of cooperating teachers in key areas of mentoring, reflection, and evaluation can lead to better preparation and enhanced development of student teachers and, in turn, a higher quality, directed education for students.

Definition of Terms

The following terms are defined for this study. There are many possible definitions that can apply to these terms but these are the ones used in this research.

Cooperating teacher hosts a student teacher in his or her classrooms, provides opportunities for professional growth, observes with comments, and acts as a role model, critical friend, instructor, and manager (Pungur, 2007). In some programs, master teacher is used as equivalent term, but in this study, the classroom teacher will be referred to as the cooperating teacher.

Practicum is the field experience in an elementary-school classroom. It can vary in length from 8 to 18 weeks and provides student teachers with opportunities to observe and

practice the art of teaching. This term also is referred to as preservice training (Pungur, 2007).

Student teacher is enrolled in a university or college teacher preparation program and is assigned to a classroom to begin the transition from educational theory to classroom practice and application (Pungur). Other commonly used terms might include credential candidate or preservice teacher.

University supervisor is a university employee who becomes a liaison between the university and the school where the student teacher is assigned and provides observations and evaluations of student teachers throughout the practicum (Pungur, 2007).

Summary

Education and training of teachers is a complex and evolving process. Classroom teachers play a critical role in student learning. Producing highly qualified teachers to provide the best possible education for all students is part of the USA dream. In order to accomplish the lofty goals of educational excellence, universities and colleges look at educational change to meet the new demands of reform. One of these changes may be the way in which cooperating teachers interact and provide gateway experiences for student teachers. Universities and colleges can step up to educational challenges by better preparing cooperating teachers to facilitate classroom learning, reflective and critical thinking, and pedagogical knowledge and to assist student teachers in learning prerequisite skills for today's students.

Up until 2009, there has been little research on the training and requirements for cooperating teachers in California. The only current requirements for cooperating teachers are that they need to hold a current California teaching credential and have 3

years of experience. Cooperating teachers are members of the teaching triad along with student teachers and university supervisors, and the cooperating teacher is the one member of the triad with a powerful and influential position, but no specific training other than their classroom experience that may or may not make them successful supervisors of adult learners in the classroom. Some instruction in adult learning will be necessary (Heller, 2004). “The same methods a teacher uses successfully to teach children may not work when the teacher is trying to promote the growth of beginning teachers” (Gordon & Maxey, 2000, p. 40).

The first chapter presented the problems of teacher education and the complexities of the student teaching practicum: student teacher placement and the selection and training of cooperating teachers. Learning the role of the cooperating teacher can be viewed through the lens of adult learning theory, specifically, Mezirow’s (1991) transformative learning theory, Vygotsky’s (1979) sociocultural theory, and Collins et al. (1989) cognitive apprenticeship. The interconnected roles of mentor, supporter, reflective listener, and supervisor are based on expert-novice communication and building personal pedagogies through shared experiences. The literature is lacking in the area of cooperating teacher training and how cooperating teachers are educated in ways to facilitate student teacher learning and helping their student teacher bridge university pedagogy and theoretical knowledge into practice.

Chapter II contains a review of the relevant literature on aspects of cooperating teacher training and selection. The literature provided a framework for the study. The methodology for the study is described in chapter III. The results of the data collected through the survey and interviews are provided in chapter IV. The information is

organized around the relevant themes addressed in the research questions. The study summary, discussion, implications, limitations, and recommendations are the components in chapter V.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The purpose of this study was to examine (a) the role of the cooperating teacher in relationship to his or her assigned student teachers, (b) the cooperating teachers' training and preparation for those roles, and (c) the cooperating teachers' perceived needs regarding training and support. The research literature as it pertains to this study and the role of the cooperating teacher as a mentor, supervisor, reflective listener, and support provider for student teachers is reviewed in this chapter. Although the primary focus of the study was on the cooperating teacher, the literature also contains research that encompasses the other members of the student teaching triad: the student teacher and the university supervisor. Also considered are the dynamic triadic relationship, the transformative and reflective influences of hosting a student teacher for both the student teacher and the cooperating teacher, the support and training needs of cooperating teachers, and training opportunities cooperating teachers receive.

There is a considerable collection of research on the student teaching practicum and the members of the traditional practicum triad: cooperating teacher, student teacher, and the university or college supervisor. The research examines the relationships within the triad and ways to improve or change those relationships. What follows is a review of the literature related to the research questions. The chapter has been divided into five sections that progress from general discourse on the cognitive apprenticeship and sociocultural aspects of the triadic relationship to research specifically related to the process of training cooperating teachers to be better prepared for their role in working with student teachers. The first section, sociocultural interaction, focuses on each partner

in the student teaching triad and triad interactions. The second section contains the literature on the importance of the cooperating teacher in the triad. The third section, reflective practices, presents research into how student teachers and cooperating teachers transform and enhance teaching practices through reflection and dynamic interaction. The fourth section contains the literature on the disconnect between student teachers' theoretical knowledge and university course work, the reality of the practicum experience, and bridging that gap through training. The final section focuses on training and support for cooperating teachers.

Sociocultural and the Cognitive Apprenticeship Aspects of the Student Teaching Triad

The literature in this section presents relevant research to better understand the social interactions among members of the student teaching triad: student teacher, cooperating teacher, and university supervisor. The studies chosen for this review reflect the importance and impact of social interactions that allow novice student teachers, to develop advanced thoughts through discourse with more experienced practitioners: cooperating teachers and supervising teachers. Included in this section are studies of reflective practices and social interactions that inform practice. Research studies in this section include the importance and impact of critical feedback and teacher dialogue.

The student teaching practicum provides a setting where cooperating teachers and student teachers work together to plan, design, and define the educational program for young learners. This partnership consists of dynamic social interactions that encourage learning by participation and modeling of skills. Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory posits that learners solve problems through communication and work with more experienced members in a learning community. Socialization is the way in which people

acquire values, attitudes, skills, and knowledge that define the group in which they desire membership (Merton, Reader, & Kendall, 1957). Lortie (1975) stated that practice plays a major role in the socialization of teachers and that induction into teaching combines one's own experiences in school, the student teaching practicum, and learning by doing.

Darling-Hammond (1994) pointed out that when school site norms and practices mirror the teaching professional culture, new teacher socialization is quick and smooth. Often, however, there are discrepancies between theory-based teacher education courses and pragmatic considerations in schools. Many cooperating teachers encourage their student teachers to ignore what they were taught during their teacher education courses because their "real learning" takes place during their student teaching practicum (Sinclair, Munns, & Woodward, 2005, p. 210).

Ottesen (2007) collected data from four student teachers about the discourse that took place between these student teachers and their cooperating teachers. Ottesen viewed student teaching, just by the title, as paradoxical in nature by virtue of the experience of being both a university student and a practicing teacher. Student teachers are concurrent participants in several practices. Student teachers are engaged in university course work, in practice classrooms, and teaching. Ottesen discovered that, from the perspective of teacher education, student teachers are learners, but in the context of their classroom placements, they are positioned as teachers and expected to perform actions to enhance their students' learning.

The cooperating teachers and university supervisors in Ottesen's study (2007) helped student teachers to verbalize experiences, give feedback, and understand how to improve their performance. Vygotsky (1986) claimed that meaning is developed in

personal settings involving concrete situations and understanding develops in two directions: either from general information or from particular facts. The discourse between cooperating teachers and student teachers yields knowledge building for both (Ottesen, 2007). Ottesen found that discussions between student teachers and cooperating teachers were directed primarily at deconstruction of activities and rarely were explicitly theoretically informed. Educational theory is important to the practice of teaching and learning to teach, and as students, student teachers have few connections to their student side. Developing tools for communication and thinking connects to cognitive apprenticeship theory (Collins, Brown & Newman, 1978) that social interactions allow people to develop advanced thoughts through discourse with more experienced practitioners. The cooperating teacher-student teacher relationship is complex as it is both teacher-student and teacher-teacher with student teachers shifting between the two identities.

Darling-Hammond (1999) warned that although student teachers are often encouraged to take a trial-and-error approach, such an approach seldom results in teaching that is different than the norm. Because classroom discipline and issues of order and control preoccupy student teachers' daily routines, their practices tend to "revert to a 'what works here' approach" rather than approaches that integrate theory and research with practice (Sinclair et al., 2005, p. 213). Both overt and tacit messages are given to student teachers, from the beginning of their practicum, to maintain the status quo and just follow what the cooperating teacher says or does in areas of curriculum as well as management.

The research on the effects of student teaching are usually small interpretive studies that add to the general understanding of the student teaching experience but lack wide-spread application or generalizability. Learning to teach usually involves spending considerable time in schools participating in practica of different lengths. In fact, field experience is a staple of teacher preparation programs. Study after study showed that experienced and newly certified teachers alike report that clinical experiences are a powerful – sometimes the single most powerful – component of teacher-preparation programs. Whether the field experience enhances the quality of teacher preparation may depend on the particular experience (Wilson, Floden, & Ferrini-Mundy, 2002).

Field experiences were examined in Sadler's (2006) qualitative study that interviewed 13 student teachers, conducted group seminar sessions, and collected written reflections to construct a phenomenological account of student teaching as viewed by the student teachers. The aim of the study was to create a picture of the shared experiences of student teachers to help understand how they struggled, succeeded, and learned as a part of their practicum. Data analysis was conducted in four stages: (a) member checking where the interviewees' transcripts and final reflections were sent to them and reviewed for veracity, (b) inductive analysis by the identification of recurrent themes, comparing themes, and identifying specific excerpts, (c) peer debriefing where another reviewer independently examined data to establish categories and to reach consensus on the final taxonomy, and (d) seminar notes were used to corroborate themes and categories.

The student teachers in Sadler's (2006) study indicated that they were overwhelmed by the demands of the profession and shift from idealistic notions of teaching to more pragmatic approaches just to get through the day, in contrast to training

and theory taught in university programs. These student teachers believed that their education programs had not provided adequate preparation for the challenges of real classrooms and schools (Sadler). Sadler found the challenges for student teachers during their student teaching practicum included classroom management, time management, institutional and job complexity, unengaged cooperating teachers, university requirements, and special-needs students.

Sadler (2006) also found that many participants discussed the importance of certain characteristics and actions of their cooperating teachers in terms of positive effects on the student teaching experience. These social interactions included providing specific and useful feedback, encouragement and praise, and relinquishing control of the classroom to the student teacher. Others struggled, however, with cooperating teachers who were unengaged, unable to provide critical feedback, or both. Sadler stated that perhaps teacher participants would benefit if cooperating teachers had been trained in how effectively to support students. Sadler suggested in his conclusion that pertinent topics for cooperating teacher training might include how to provide critical feedback, how to negotiate classroom control, and the importance of encouragement. Better communication and interaction between cooperating teachers and university supervisors also might alleviate some potential conflicts of goals and outcomes between the institutions (Sadler).

Student teachers defined and described what they determined to be the most helpful behaviors and practices demonstrated by cooperating teachers (Glenn, 2006). Student teachers noted the importance of seeing good classroom organization and planning, positive rapport with students, knowledge of subject matter, establishment of a

daily routine, good classroom management, and compassion toward students (Glenn, 2006). These descriptions define classroom cooperating teachers first as teachers of their own students and secondarily as teachers or mentors of their student teachers. Glenn also concluded from his limited study that effective mentors collaborate rather than dictate, relinquish an appropriate level of control, allow for personal relationships, share constructive feedback, and accept differences. These social interactions are a part of the transition and development of student teachers into teaching professional.

Student teachers use social interaction to inform their practices as well as make decisions based on whatever works when there is a lack of social interaction. Weasmer and Woods (2003) collected data on 28 cooperating teachers via formal interviews and demographic surveys following the student teachers' practicum, and they reported that cooperating teachers model more than pedagogy. The researchers (Weasmer & Woods) concluded that host teachers (cooperating teachers) were unaware of the possibilities for helping student teachers. The cooperating teachers were unable to develop collaborative approaches to instruction and invite critical thinking (Weasmer & Woods). Cooperating teachers were sincere and enthusiastic but lacked role definition and intention of purpose (Weasmer & Woods). Cooperating teachers in the Weasmer and Woods study often left student teachers to sink or swim. Attitudes of benign neglect were viewed by cooperating teachers as opportunities for student teachers to enjoy immersion into the classroom without intervention. For lack of better training, cooperating teachers opted to do nothing. This weak or actual absence of cooperating teacher training is an opportunity for university and college personnel to step in and make a positive and influential change (Weasmer & Woods).

The literature in a study by Fairbanks, Freedman, and Kohn (2000) drew on Vygotsky's (1978) work as a means to understand teachers' professional development. Learning to teach is a mediated activity that depends on social interaction. Novices learn through peripheral participation in the activities of the profession as in student teaching. New professionals gain knowledge and experience as they gradually undertake the responsibilities of the practitioner. Beginners engage in the work of the profession and have opportunities to learn its values and skill without bearing the burden of carrying out all of the functions of the experienced members. Mentoring a new teacher is similar to learning to dance, which entails knowing when to lead and when to follow. Participants in mentoring partnerships must negotiate the give-and-take of the relationship and the delicate balance of leading and following.

The roles assumed by cooperating teachers and student teachers are often complex, not defined clearly, and evolve over time based on the relationship established with personal-professional interactions. Stanulis and Russell (2000) conducted a small qualitative study to discover ways in which cooperating teachers and student teachers made sense of their roles during the field placement period. The study included 20 student teachers placed in classrooms during the pilot of a full year, intensive, field-based program designed for college graduates with degrees in subject areas other than education. The program emphasized the need for quality conversations to be held among partners and supervisors. Collaboration, reflection, and conversation helped construct meaning in a cognitive apprenticeship context (Collins et al., 1989) and people's thinking that includes both internal and external dialogue are used to sort out and clarify meaning (Smagorinsky, 2007).

Stanulis and Russell (2000) concluded that student teachers must collaborate with cooperating teachers to help them understand the kind of flexible interactions needed to connect new ideas to existing ones, to be explicit about task expectations, and to coach student teachers with familiar and supportive language. In order for there to be reciprocal benefits for all members of the triad, university supervisors and cooperating teachers must become conscious and explicit about those roles and provide professional development to learn how to guide student teachers. The triad is a powerful dynamic, but in most circumstances these three people have little opportunity to all reflect on practice together. Making more time for this reflection would be of great mutual benefit.

Another study conducted by Ethell and McMeniman (2002) added to the understanding of explicit teaching and modeling and student teacher-cooperating teacher interaction. The research explored cognitive apprenticeship and the importance of experts (cooperating teachers) explaining and clarifying thinking, beliefs, knowledge, or theories to student teachers as they engage in their profession. Participants argued that mere observation of good teachers is not, by itself, an effective means of learning to teach (Ethell & McMeniman). Several conclusions came from the Ethell and McMeniman study. Observations only could lead to misconceptions about good teaching practices. Participating in collaborative reflections of expert thinking contributed to the realization that good teaching is not as easy as it looks and that good teaching cannot be learned through observation of teachers alone. Teaching is more than what is explicit and learnable through observation. It is through the implicit knowledge of teachers that is shared through talking and connecting that student teachers begin to make the links between thinking and practice.

Participants in the Ethell and McMeniman (2002) research identified that access to cooperating teachers' thinking about teaching is a key element missing in the practicum. Learning to teach solely through the observation of master teachers ignores the critical elements of teaching provided by the thinking and intentions behind observable classroom practice and restricts participants to intuit the intentions behind cooperating teachers' classroom practices (Ethell & McMeniman).

Danielson's (2002) work concurred that watching what teachers do is not sufficient for knowing why they do it. Effective teachers need to be able to articulate the purpose behind their behaviors. Student teachers "must understand the connections between what was taught yesterday, what is taught today, and what will be taught tomorrow so that they can understand how individual lessons fit in the greater curriculum picture" (Danielson, p. 183).

Beyond the academic side of training new teachers, there is the emotional connection teachers have toward their jobs. The heart and emotional side of interactions with cooperating teachers appears in the practicum experience and is important to the social interactions student teachers have with cooperating teachers because teaching is seen not as just what someone does but more defines who they are (Beck & Kosnik, 2002). Student teachers take their practicum position to heart and want an emotional as well as professional connection to the cooperating teacher. Based on Beck and Kosnik's interview transcripts and questionnaire data of 65 student teachers, the following items emerged as components of a good practicum: (a) emotional support from the cooperating teacher, (b) peer relationship with the cooperating teacher, (c) collaboration with the cooperating teacher, (d) flexibility in teaching content and method, (e) cooperating

teacher feedback, (f) solid teaching practices on the part of the cooperating teacher, and (g) heavy but not excessive workload during the practicum.

Beck and Kosnik (2002) were surprised by how important emotional support was to student teachers. Student teachers wanted to be viewed as teachers and partners in the process and genuinely were interested in issues of teaching and learning. The student teachers in the study showed a sincere desire to develop as teachers and struggled with situations where they thought students' learning or welfare were affected adversely. When asked to comply with classroom procedures or practices they disagreed with, they did so reluctantly. The student teachers in the Beck and Kosnik study were legitimate in their interest to be treated with professional respect. Beck and Kosnik believed that cooperating teachers should have seen the results of their study so cooperating teachers could be aware of what student teachers needed from them in the field experience. This shared knowledge can help overcome misunderstandings in perceptions and bad feelings that can develop when outcomes and needs are different and not expressed (Beck & Kosnik).

The student teaching triad is a complex, dynamic, socially interactive relationship that relies on experienced practitioners, the cooperating teachers, to share their thinking and actions with their less experienced counterparts, student teachers. Conversations and social interactions assist the construction of meaning in the sociocultural context (Vygotsky, 1978) of the classroom. The practicum provides such a setting for social interaction whereby feedback and conversations assist beginning professionals to develop a personal pedagogy. The literature indicates a need for providing training for cooperating teachers to learn to connect thinking and practice, collaborate effectively

with their student teacher partners, and provide reflective conversations that deepen understanding.

The Importance of the Cooperating Teacher

Cooperating teachers have a great impact on the development and training of student teachers. In this section, research studies that explore the dynamic and interactive relationship between student teachers and cooperating teachers are examined along with the role and importance of training for cooperating teachers. Cooperating teachers are more than just role models: providing more than just instructional strategies and teaching tips but assisting in the formation of personal pedagogies for student teachers just entering the classroom.

Several studies (Anderson, 2005; Borko, 1995; Bullough, 2004; Clarke, 2006; Flowers, 2006; Glenn, 2006; Sudzina, Giebelhaus, & Coolican, 1997; Wilson et al., 2002) stated the importance of the student teaching practicum as the culminating activity in preservice training and the pivotal role of the cooperating teacher in that experience. “The cooperating teacher is the most influential player in the cooperating teacher, student teacher, and university teacher educator triangle, it behooves teacher educators to take seriously the particular and unique role of cooperating teachers as they contribute to student teachers’ successes or failures” (Sudzina et al, p. 33). Whitney, Golez, Nagel, and Nieto (2002) used the results of 900 teacher questionnaires to form four focus groups of up to 10 teachers to explore the influence of cooperating teachers. Whitney et al. found that teachers reported overwhelmingly that their cooperating teachers had the greatest impact on how they teach. Their study results found that the cooperating teachers taught

the student teachers new instructional strategies, classroom management techniques, and the more practical side of teaching with little connection to theoretical knowledge.

Suranna and Moss (2002) defined cooperating teachers as fine classroom practitioners who are committed to the lives of their students. These leaders engage in curriculum development and change through district-level committees. Teacher leaders are not afraid to take a stand, challenge conventions, or be in opposition to the norm when that is in the best interest of the school, students, colleagues, or themselves. These cooperating teachers serve as role models to student teachers, but these professionals may or may not be effective with student teachers in the role of adult learning.

Anderson (2005) found cooperating teachers were often viewed as experts and seen as holding power over student teachers.

The cooperating teachers in this study had tremendous power to shape the actions, intentions, and beliefs of their student teachers, yet most did not exercise that power. It was clear that the student teachers wanted to learn from their cooperating teachers, yet it was not clear that the cooperating teachers knew their student teachers wanted to be taught. (p. 321)

The research (Anderson) did not explore if cooperating teachers had a sufficient impact to change student teachers' beliefs and intentions. Because cooperating teachers did not exert their potential power, it is hard to evaluate the extent to which they might have been able to change and direct student teacher actions and intentions (Anderson).

The cooperating teachers' relationship with the student teacher is viewed from divergent vantages that range from very involved and engaged partnerships to a more hands-off approach. Baumgartner, Koerner, and Rust (2002) suggested that cooperating teachers are expected merely to open their classrooms to student teachers and act as role models with collegial support and positive feedback. Mentoring, that is, assessment and

feedback used to develop skills, should reside with the university supervisors even though university supervisors rarely saw this as their role (Baumgartner et al., 2002).

In Beck and Kosnik's (2000) 2-year longitudinal study involving 65 student teachers, 7 university supervisors, and 20 cooperating teachers, two broad concepts of the role of the cooperating teachers were examined. First, the *practical initiation model* seen as an apprenticeship model that introduces student teachers to the realities of the classroom can be either a sympathetic learning by experience approach or a tough, sink-or-swim approach. Second, there is the *critical interventionist model*, in which cooperating teachers encourage student teachers to question current practices and develop alternatives. If this second approach ignores theory and continues on a merely practical mode, this model may even impede good teacher education. The main goal of the study was to find out how cooperating teachers viewed and practiced their supervisory role. The Beck and Kosnik study found that cooperating teachers were willing to take subject-matter courses or special education but had no interest in courses to improve their mentoring or collaborative discourse with student teachers. Cooperating teachers were skeptical about whether or not schools would provide time, money, and resources for training, and cooperating teachers believed there were more pressing issues facing schools than supervision of student teachers.

The diverse role of the cooperating teacher is seen through a variety of lenses and ranges from very unengaged and disconnected to a fully engaged strong, influential, and supportive mentor. The interaction between student teachers and cooperating teachers is difficult to measure and its influence is even more difficult to measure. Levels of commitment, desire, excitement, and interest vary greatly from cooperating teacher to

cooperating teacher, and their training varies widely. There does not appear to be strict selection criterion for cooperating teachers, and there is little prestige associated with being a cooperating teacher.

There is also clear evidence that mentoring PTs is not often valued as an important activity either in schools or universities. This is demonstrated by the lack of preparation and support for the work, the temporary and marginal status of those who do the work in universities, and the lack of incentives and rewards for doing a good job. (Zeichner, 2002, p. 60)

One area that is not known is how much student teachers learn from cooperating teachers with differing values, intents, and beliefs. A bad or conflicting teacher placement may present valuable learning lessons as student teachers learn what not to do and can confidently defend and develop best classroom practices.

The research exploring the importance of the cooperating teacher indicates that cooperating teachers play a pivotal and influential role in the student teaching practicum. The roles the cooperating teacher play are diverse and dynamic and involve being a model, reflective listener, and expert. Cooperating teachers have tremendous influence over the beliefs and future practices of student teachers working in their classrooms. Given this influence, the research indicates a lack of required, consistent training for cooperating teachers. Although cooperating teachers may be effective and excellent practitioners with elementary-school students, they may not be effective with adult learners as student teachers. Cooperating teachers may need additional training to transition to supervisors and mentors that provide feedback, assessment, and reflection.

Transformative Powers of Reflective Practice

The research studies in this section examine the importance of reflection in the transformation of teacher practices. Conversations between cooperating teachers and their

student teachers help make stronger connections between assignments and theory and relate practice to pedagogy. Research looks at ways cooperating teachers reflect on lessons with their student teachers and deepen the understanding of curriculum for themselves and their protégés. Reflective conversations require cooperating teachers to examine, defend, and explain procedures and processes that lead to learning and deepening of their own understanding of pedagogy

Reflection and academic conversations add another dimension to the practicum experience. Borko and Mayfield (2000) found in their study that in-depth, reflective conversations, although considered important, rarely occurred between student teachers and cooperating teacher. Feedback within the student teacher-cooperating teacher dyad was often rushed and superficial as cooperating teachers went about the business of student education. Student teachers learned not to expect much from their relationship with their cooperating teacher, and the cooperating teacher, rather than mentor and collaborator, became the person who provided the setting for student teachers to practice and learn on their own by doing. Cherian (2007) found that cooperating teachers, at the beginning of the field experience, were there to provide technical guidance, procedural help, and encouragement, but toward the end of the practicum, student teachers wanted their cooperating teachers to make stronger connections with assignments and theoretical frameworks; cooperating teachers had difficulty helping student teachers relate to practice on a deeper theoretical level.

Reflection is an important part of learning, and students engaged in concrete experiences need to use these experiences to formulate and test abstract ideas (McGunn, 2003). Student teaching is a common concrete experience implemented in teacher

education programs across the US. Although student teachers busily are engaged in the planning and execution of lesson plans, managing student behaviors, and assessing student learning, time to reflect on these experiences is necessary in order to implement change based on results of behaviors. In a small study involving four students over a 4-semester period conducted by McGunn, effectiveness of reflection in promoting change and development of student teachers self-knowledge about their teaching was examined. McGunn discovered that, when supervisors were given tools to provide a reflection model for discussion, the cooperating teacher-student teacher interchange became more collaborative and less authoritative. Communication between cooperating teachers and student teachers improved, and student teachers became more responsible for evaluating themselves. Student teachers improve instruction when they struggle through the process of reflection, not necessarily when cooperating teachers tell them what to do and how to do it.

Another perspective of the interpersonal dynamics of the student teachers-cooperating teacher-university supervisor partnering was examined using a model of reciprocal teaching. Lemlech and Hertzog (1999) investigated what cooperating teachers and student teachers learn from each other. The researchers used two case studies to provide data on cooperating teachers and student teachers. The first study focused on student teachers and the professional development of their cooperating teachers. A second study was conducted at the end of student teaching and assessed cooperating teachers' strengths as perceived by their student teachers. The two studies spanned an academic year, and both studies used observational data, questionnaires, journal entries, and interview data. It was found that reciprocal pairing required more collegial

conversations that led to more content and context discussions. Both cooperating teachers and student teachers gained a better sense of themselves as professionals as they engaged in dialogue, reflection, and collegiality (Lemlech & Hertzog).

Curriculum discussions led to deeper understanding of pupils' needs and interests (Lemlech & Hertzog). Partnerships in learning also helped student teachers gain practical knowledge of management, organization, and the planning process. Cooperating teachers observed while student teachers were teaching and anticipated their difficulties. These observations also led to questions and probes that caused reflection about instructional strategies. Using reflective practices led to discussions about best practices and deeper evaluations of performance and how to improve instruction and curriculum delivery. The partner student-teacher reflective processes were enhanced by the situational knowledge and experience of the cooperating teachers. Even in cases where the cooperating teacher was pedagogically not grounded in the teaching models, they frequently facilitated the reflective process (Lemlech & Hertzog).

Portfolio design offered another way to look at the cooperating teacher-student teacher interaction. Wray (2006) examined the extent to which participation in a portfolio-based teaching learning community impacts student teachers' learning and understanding. Nine students volunteered to participate in the two-semester study. A portfolio is a collection of evidence in relation to learning that provides evidence of someone's knowledge, skills, and dispositions (Bird, 1990). The quality and quantity of support provided student teachers during the development of their teaching portfolios is critical to the navigation of the portfolio process. Student teachers must be given time and opportunity to engage in conceptual thinking and understanding during portfolio

construction to gain the full understanding of its purpose and professional benefits. Cooperating teachers need to be engaged in collaborative feedback and reflection to assist student teachers in creating records of best practice and theory-based lessons. Portfolios take time, are confusing to organize, and often lack a clear purpose or audience resulting in uncertainty and frustration. It is important for student teachers, university supervisors, and cooperating teachers to understand the portfolio process and its importance and to support each other through its completion. The discussion of what should be included in the portfolio facilitates the cognitive apprenticeship learning theory (Collins et al., 1989), and collegial conversations help funnel down to the essence of student learning and evidence of that phenomenon.

Findings of the Bird (1990) study indicate that most student teachers found the process of selecting artifacts and reflecting on coursework and fieldwork experiences while constructing the portfolios contributed to their growth and development. “With discussions revolving around sharing, reflecting upon, and refining their beliefs and assumptions about teaching and learning, the members of this teacher learning community engaged in a collaborative professional development activity” (p. 1150).

The research literature on reflective practices reveals the importance of reflection and introspection on the development of deeper understanding and application of best teaching practices. The conversations that develop around questions of theory and practice enhance the implementation of change. Both cooperating teachers and student teachers can benefit from reflective conversations as content and context discussions take place after lessons are presented and analyzed. Cooperating teachers may not be instructed in the benefits and procedures of collaborative, reflective feedback, but

practitioners engaged in these methods benefit from this professional development activity. Collegial conversations enhance the learning of the parties involved. Cooperating teachers may benefit from learning to incorporate the practice of reflective discussions when collaborating with their student teachers.

Bridging the Gap between Educational Pedagogy and Practice

In this final section of the research review, the studies were selected based on the connection of theory to practice. The universities preparing future teachers place great importance on the practicum opportunity for student teachers to link what they have learned to what they will be teaching.

Student teachers spend the practicum experience applying the theoretical knowledge they learned in university courses to classroom practices and rely on cooperating teachers to model and reflect best practices. A study conducted by Sanders, Dowson, and Sinclair (2005) looked at the convergence between what cooperating teachers are said to do in the practicum and what they actually do in their practice. Four cooperating teachers and their partner student teachers were observed for a total of 87 hours with one-hour interviews conducted at the end of the observations. The purpose was to observe cooperating teachers in action to generate deeper descriptions of their supervisory practices and to compare descriptions and observations with theoretical conceptualizations of the roles of cooperating teachers. There is little consensus in the literature as to the precise roles cooperating teachers are expected to fulfill during student teachers' professional development experiences. The role of the cooperating teacher, although often vaguely defined, is critical to the success of the student teachers' professional experiences. Sanders et al., compiled a list of roles often associated with

cooperating teachers: model teacher, observer and evaluator, planner of teaching experiences and demonstrator, conferencer, professional peer, counselor, and friend. Sanders et al. postulated that cooperating teachers require some training or support for these roles in order to be successful.

The overwhelming majority (66%) of interactions in Sanders et al., (2005) study recorded represented cooperating teachers' roles as planners and modelers. Although this finding is not surprising, it is not necessarily what is reflected in the theoretical literature. The interaction responses certainly are heavier on the practical side of planning and getting through the day and much less on the theoretical reasons for presenting lessons. Evaluator, friend, and professional peer accounted for 30% of the observations. Given the clear emphasis in the literature concerning effective evaluation, peer collaboration, and personal support in promoting positive practicum outcomes, cooperating teachers and university supervisors might give this interaction greater consideration. According to the participants, most evaluations were between or within classes, and little reflective time was available to go over and evaluate either the lessons or the presentation of the lessons. If these roles are truncated, which this research indicates they are, the value of these roles for student teachers' development is more limited than the importance indicates. Sanders et al. suggested that given these results, cooperating teachers might put more actual emphasis on these important activities and make a more concerted effort to include these within the day or lessons. Lastly, counselor and conferencer accounted for only 3% of the observations (Sanders et al.).

Cooperating teachers acknowledged in their interviews the importance of their roles, especially conferencer, and most cooperating teachers reported their emphasis in

these areas. There is an apparent disjuncture between the importance the participants attached to these roles and the actual observations of the roles being fulfilled. The findings indicate that the theorized roles of cooperating teachers may not be practice by them. Perhaps this lack of use may speak to the support and professional development of cooperating teachers. Because the roles of cooperating teachers in literature are not replicated in the classroom, these roles and expectations of cooperating teachers might need to be taught explicitly to cooperating teachers or given to them in terms of expectations prior to having a student teacher assigned (Sanders et al., 2005).

Brouwer and Korthagen (2005) conducted a 4-and-½-year longitudinal study with 357 student teachers, 128 cooperating teachers, and 31 university supervisors using self-reports, document analysis, questionnaires, and interviews. One of the research questions addressed the relative influences of teacher education programs and occupational socialization in schools on the development of teaching competence. The study investigated the programs that bridged the gap between theory and practice and found that as teachers moved further away from the practicum experience they analyzed their lessons and reflected on best practices less systematically than during student teaching even though they were in agreement that reflection on their work helped them improve professional competence. The longer the practicum hours in the classroom, the more opportunities cooperating teachers and student teachers had to confer. The more opportunities students were given to reflect on experiences and reorganize teaching plans, the more value student teachers were able to derive from university courses. “Searching for ways of optimizing the integration between practice and theory in teacher education would appear a highly relevant endeavor” (p. 216). Although reflective practices were

found to be beneficial for competence and confidence development they also were problematic because reflective practices are time consuming and require additional time with colleagues, cooperating teachers, or university supervisors.

Fifty-five student teachers and 48 cooperating teachers participated in Clement's (2002) research about what cooperating teachers were really teaching student teachers about classroom management. The literature for this study suggested that "the student teachers spends more time with the cooperating teacher than any other individual instructor throughout the duration of the degree program" (p. 47). In light of this intense interaction, developing a positive relationship between the cooperating teacher and the student teacher is very important. What cooperating teachers share or teach the student teacher is important also especially in areas of weakness like classroom management.

The survey from Clement's (2002) study revealed that cooperating teachers most commonly gave hints about how they handled classroom management rather than research-based principles or practical guidelines based on theory. Cooperating teachers without a working-knowledge base may be passing along a random set of survival skills to their student teachers. The cooperating teachers were unfamiliar with classroom management books student teachers were using for class instruction and cooperating teachers did not refer to any specific authors as references. The cooperating teachers, instead, saw their role as model as the primary tool for sharing classroom management ideas. Researchers recommended at least a workshop in classroom management for cooperating teachers and the introduction of a common language and knowledge base of authors that might link information between cooperating teachers and student teachers. The Clement survey results suggested more dialogue between university supervisors and

cooperating teachers about the role of teacher educators and more professional development classes offered by the university. Increasingly diverse learning populations require more than tips or tricks to manage classrooms. Student teachers need to learn classroom management by more sophisticated practices than simply learning the way it always has been done (Clement).

Whitney, Golez, Nagel, and Nieto (2002) sent lengthy surveys to 900 classroom teachers who worked in school districts in Southern California as part of the strategic planning commission's desire to examine successes and failure of teacher preparation programs. The survey instrument included 5-point Likert scale questions with spaces for written comments. Focus groups eventually were used to help further explore the quality of the teacher education courses and preparation. Several recurring themes emerged: student teachers value applied experiences and their education course theory, reading, and discussions had greater meaning when linked to actual practice. Cooperating teachers have the greatest influence on student teachers but were uninformed about university course work. Student teachers confused theoretical knowledge and theory because these theories lacked meaning until student teachers were in the field and had a reason to know, remember, and apply theoretical concepts. Some participants believed that there should be a greater distinction between subject-matter (what am I going to cover in science this week) and teacher methodology courses with more emphasis on subject-matter content. The more practical side of teacher education classes held more interest to student teachers. This study was the university's attempt to reflect on their student teacher training program – the courses and the practicum - and to look at ways to improve instruction and delivery (Whitney et al.).

Student teachers' thinking about disconnects between what they believe about teaching, what they learn in their university coursework, and what they observe of behavior management practices in public-school classrooms was the topic of Stoughton's (2006) research. This narrative study was based on the reflective writings of 48 student teachers from two cohorts in a large metropolitan Midwest university. The researcher focused on student journal entries and examined reflections about classroom management practices.

The student teachers all understood the importance of maintaining order, but they were ambivalent about classroom approaches. Student teachers believed their cooperating teachers reacted to student behavior expeditiously rather than educationally. Student teachers expressed discomfort that cooperating teachers' needs for order, obedience, and compliance were served rather than student needs for understanding and growth. There was general student teacher agreement that behavior plans "must be about more than maintaining order, they must also deal with inculcating an understanding of the reasons behind the rules" (Stoughton, 2006, p. 1034). The student teachers objected to the isolation of students as a negative consequence for their actions.

The impact of cooperating teachers' practices on student teachers' beliefs is considerable: when student teachers are in their field-base practicum, can they effect change in classrooms where their philosophies differ from their cooperating teachers? Training of cooperating teachers in theory-based classroom-management techniques is another important collaborative connection between what is taught and what is practiced. When student teachers learn one thing in university classes and are confronted with

conflicting values in their practicum placements, there is a disconnect that causes disequilibrium for student teachers (Stoughton, 2006).

Student teachers are caught between two complex organizations: schools where they complete practice teaching and the colleges and universities that provide course work. Although colleges do have rules regarding student teaching, they have little ability to exert those rules on the public-school system that they depend on to serve as student-teaching sites. The college may make it known what they expect in a student teaching placement, but there is no direct system of compliance (Moore, 2000). Moore's study had two goals: one, to provide an organizational theory of student teaching placement so that the practicum is successful and two, to provide a theoretical basis for student teacher placement. Data were collected through interviews and focus groups. Results concluded that principals in charge of student teacher placement were unable to describe objective, written criteria for the selection of cooperating teachers. University placement officials indicated that cooperating teachers should have knowledge of adult learning and an understanding of the mentor process; yet no provisions were in place to provide such training or had any the cooperating teachers in the study received that training. Universities hold a precarious position when they rely on principals to make placement decisions because the university supervisors risk antagonizing a school by challenging teacher competence of a selected cooperating teacher.

The university wants to assume that the school district uses some sort of system to evaluate worthiness of cooperating teachers to supervise student teachers, and the school wants to assume that the university screens student teachers, their university supervisors, and the faculty who instruct preservice teachers in those knowledge and skill bases necessary to teaching children. (p. 22)

Moore (2000) found that universities provided a handbook for cooperating teachers, and this handbook was the primary means of communication of the responsibilities of the cooperating teacher. There is, however, no means of assurance that cooperating teachers read or follow the handbook. Moore recommended deeper partnership relationships between universities and schools. She suggested giving site principals and cooperating teachers access to university classes (tuition free), fitness facilities, university cultural events, and library privileges and perhaps even asking them to teach some classes as adjunct faculty. These incentives offered to increasingly impoverished schools might make mentoring programs highly desirable, sought after, and competitive (Moore).

Examining university course work and student teaching was the focus of a single case study (Smagorinsky et al., 2000) that investigated the alignment between these two student teacher activities. The constructivist student teaching program of the case study participant was in substantial misalignment with the values and practices of the cooperating teacher. The constructivist approach learned by the student teacher stresses methods of teaching that are learner-centered, with students involved in generative, collaborative activities that enable cognitive changes. The cooperating teacher's approach to teaching was quite different, with an emphasis on classroom management, firm control, routines around a basal reading series, worksheets, and teacher-generated activities. The student teacher thought there was little opportunity to construct a personal style with the cooperating teachers' mimetic mentoring approach. The student teacher was provided so little opportunity to practice the methods she learned in her university program that she was afraid she would lose that knowledge altogether. This misalignment

can have consequences for the teachers' early career identity as concepts of teaching must be accommodated to techniques they have been taught in their university courses to be either ineffective or even detrimental to children (Smagorinsky et al.).

As student teachers enter teaching, they gravitate toward conventional Kindergarten to 12th (K-12) grade practices, dismissing those endorsed by the university as impractical. There is disjuncture between the practices that beginning teachers encounter in their university teacher preparation courses and those they encounter in the K-12 grade classrooms in which they teach: conflict between constructivist practices endorsed by the university and transmissive instruction prevalent in K-12 classrooms. Student teachers dismiss those university teachings as too theoretical. Collaboration between teacher educators and K-12 teachers can bridge the university-school divide and contribute to beginning-teacher learning (Anagnostopoulos, Smith, & Basmadjian, 2007). These researchers set up the Network, a cross-institutional collaborative, where university teacher educators work with K-12 colleagues. Meetings took place monthly between 2001 and 2005, and teacher educators and K-12 colleagues discussed professional literature, worked with student teachers, and shared tools to use with student teachers. The Network designed a performance-based rubric aimed at helping student teachers build their discussion practices (Anagnostopoulos et al.).

Prior to the Network, many teachers expressed frustration with the lack of support they received to develop mentoring practices. Most mentors adopted a "how do you think it went?" script intended to promote intern reflection but lacked depth. Developing a rubric also facilitated substantive conversations in the methods classes about best practices in the classroom. The rubric served several purposes. Teachers used the rubric

to identify crucial questions like how to prepare students for discussions, what roles do interns play in the discussion, and how to get students involved. These questions structured and focused cooperating teacher-student teacher planning and preobservation meetings and provided one way to improve the learning opportunities teacher educators provide beginning teachers (Anagnostopoulos et al., 2007).

Teacher education programs need to provide support to keep the teachers they train in the profession. Student teachers are often placed in schools for practicum experiences that have little semblance to the schools in which they receive their first placements. Student teachers need ample opportunities to visit and observe in a variety of schools and interact with teachers in realistic school settings. Cooperating teachers need to engage student teachers in discussions about alternate approaches to instruction that might be used in a variety of applications, helping them to be adaptable to changing environments and demands. Cooperating teachers often isolate student teachers who are shocked at the realities of a fulltime job placement. Cooperating teachers have an obligation to introduce student teachers to all aspects of a teaching career.

Improvement of Training and Support for Cooperating Teachers

“The cooperating teacher is the most influential player in the cooperating teacher, student teacher, and university supervisor educator triangle, it behooves teacher educators to take seriously the particular and unique role of cooperating teachers as they contribute to student teachers’ successes or failures” (Sudzina et al., 1997, p. 33). This theme has been a central thread in the writing about cooperating teachers, yet there is limited literature on cooperating teacher training. This section focus is on some of the recommendations for types of training, but few, if any, have been employed.

Field experience has long been considered a valuable component of teacher education (Brimfield & Leonard, 1983; Conant, 1963; Silberman, 1970), but the true potential of that field experience has not been reached. University teacher-education programs place students with little regard for the supervisory practices of the field-based cooperating teacher. Future teachers are often working with enthusiastic cooperating teachers who are ill prepared for their supervisory role, have unrealistic expectations, or are tentative about providing feedback to student teachers. A quasi-experimental design study conducted by Giebelhaus and Bowman (2002), using 29 student teachers from two Midwestern National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) accredited teacher-education institutions, examined the impact of specific methods of mentor training on the demonstrated classroom performance of student teachers. The study was based on Vygotsky's (1978) work regarding constructivism. Vygotsky viewed development as a social process whereby social interaction assists the learning process. In teacher education, the cooperating teacher and student teacher work together through the social interaction of discussion and modeling as active learning evolves. This social setting of collaboration provides opportunities for prospective teachers to think aloud and examine thoughts and learn about strengths and weaknesses.

Giebelhaus and Bowman (2002) selected The *Praxis III/Pathwise* model as a training framework based on its constructivist view of meaning making. This framework was developed by Educational Testing Service (ETS) and is used in some states for licensure. The *Praxis II/Pathwise* framework for direct observation and teaching assessment are companion pieces: *Pathwise* contains tools used in direct observation and assessment of classroom performance, *Praxis III* is the formal evaluation component. The

framework is divided into four broad domains: (a) organizing content knowledge, (b) creating an environment for student learning, (c) teaching for student learning, and (d) teacher professionalism.

In the Giebelhaus and Bowman study (2002) two levels of training were examined using data from the four domains of effective teaching gathered at three different points during the student teaching practicum. The 29 participants were assigned randomly to an experimental group that used the training of cooperating teachers (n=14) or to a comparison group that used a traditional orientation of cooperating teachers approach (n=15). The two groups were placed randomly in schools and participants were assigned randomly to cooperating teachers within the schools. All student teachers and cooperating teachers received an initial 4-hour orientation, but the 14 assigned to the experimental group received training in the general principles and practices of supervision and the process of *Praxis III/Pathwise* framework. There were 10 training sessions (3 hours each session). Data were collected at three points: a preassessment at the beginning, another at the midpoint, and one at the end of the student teaching practicum. Two raters were trained, and interrater reliability was .95.

Analysis of data using analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) and multivariate ANCOVA (MANCOVA) indicated that student teachers who collaborated with trained cooperating teachers demonstrated more complete and effective planning, more effective classroom instruction, and greater reflectivity on practice than those whose cooperating teachers only received the orientation. ANCOVA was used to control pretest scores on the four domain means, and MANCOVA was used to control pretest differences and group differences on the 19 discrete criteria within the domains. The data were analyzed

using one MANCOVA with 19 dependent variables. It is questionable whether assumptions were met for these procedures given the small sample size and the large number of dependent variables. ANCOVA revealed a statistically significant difference between groups at the .001 level on each of the four domains. MANCOVA revealed statistical significance exceeding .05 level on 11 of the 19 skills. Type I errors or false positives can be created when small sample sizes are used in conjunction with a large number of dependent variables.

The results in the Giebelhaus and Bowman (2002) study indicate that cooperating teachers trained in general principles of mentoring and supervision had a more positive impact on prospective teacher development than cooperating teachers with no training. Although some questions arise about personal differences of student teachers and cooperating teachers, the results of the study clearly indicate that mentor training does assist cooperating teachers by providing a framework for effective and comprehensive feedback for developing professionals. Giebelhaus and Bowman concluded that colleges and universities must be concerned about the preparation of cooperating teachers and training to create more effective and productive learning environments for student teachers.

There is a shift in the educational paradigm from the role of cooperating teacher as a practicum supervisor toward a role of teacher educator (Clarke, 2001). Student teachers are more sophisticated and the delivery of educational materials to a divergent population demands more professionally polished teachers. Teachers need professional development to keep them current with academic best practices and changing school technologies. As cooperating teachers mentor and supervise student teachers, they too

need to know if they are performing up to standards. Clark found that although cooperating teachers wanted feedback on their interactions and supervision of student teachers, they never received any, neither from the student teachers with whom they worked nor the university supervisors who supervised over the classroom practicum. For cooperating teachers who have multiple student teachers over many years, how do they know they are doing the best job possible for their student teachers? Without formative assessments, cooperating teachers probably just keep doing what has worked in the past. Flowers (2006) raised the question of sufficient training for cooperating teachers in assessment procedures. It was discovered that many cooperating teachers had no training in assessment or evaluation in adult learning environments; yet they were requested by university supervisors to provide feedback for the student teachers who practiced in their classroom environments.

How cooperating teachers viewed and practiced their supervisory role was the focus of a study (Beck & Kosnik, 2000) asking 65 student teachers, 20 cooperating teachers, and 7 university supervisors about their views on imitation of practice or critical interventionist practice. The researchers wanted to know if cooperating teachers perceived their role as models, where student teachers learn by watching and doing, or as mentors, where they spur student teachers on to critical thinking and innovative practices. These divergent thoughts and practices have huge implications for student teachers assigned to their rooms. Almost half of the interviewees said the university program could be improved if the university increased instruction to both student teachers and cooperating teachers in topics such as classroom management, special education, unit and lesson planning, assessment and evaluation, knowledge of the curriculum, how to access

resources, and parent contact. If classes are offered and shared, the teaching partners share goals and information that would blend university and school programs and visions.

The cooperating teachers in this study (Beck & Kosnik, 2000) indicated they would be willing to take classes but showed little interest in classes about becoming a better supervisor or mentor. They were only interested in the practical classes that had direct, immediate application in the classroom. Time and money also were factors in teacher training. Teachers are busy, time is at a premium, and paying for additional classes seemed unlikely for either individuals or through stipends (Beck & Kosnik).

The research continues to stress the importance of training and extensions of cooperating teacher learning. Clarke and Jarvis-Selinger (2005) stated that the results of their research, “encourage us to scrutinize more closely the assumptions that underlie our conceptions of cooperating teachers and how they approach their work with student teachers, and provide clearer direction for designing professional development efforts that both enable and enhance their work as school-based educators” (p. 77). The purpose of a study conducted by Lunenberg, Korthagen, and Swensen (2007) was to examine modeling by teacher educators as a means of changing the views and practices of future teachers. The researchers were focused on three specific situations: (a) modeling new learning explicitly, (b) modeling new learning explicitly and connected to student teachers’ practice, and (c) connecting exemplars to theory. The findings indicate that explicit modeling is not common among university supervisors. Less than half of the university supervisors helped student teachers translate explicit modeling into behavior to assist their own practices. The observations also revealed that none of the university supervisors linked their practices with theoretical notions.

The finding that teacher educators did not link their practice with theory is remarkable in view of the fact that establishing such links is a key issue in teacher education. This disturbing finding seems to confirm Bullough's statement (1997) that teacher educators tend to ignore public theory, relying instead on common sense, personal experience, and implicit theory. (p. 597)

University supervisors lack experience in the modeling of connecting exemplary teaching practices to theory. During university supervisors' visits to the classroom, cooperating teachers do not observe this model practiced or used for their own interactions with student teachers. Connecting theory to practice is an important, but an often-overlooked component of student teacher training (Lunenberg et al., 2007).

In the US, democracy depends on a literate electorate produced primarily by public education, yet universities and school systems provide little if any training or support for the teacher educators who will train the next generation of teachers. This training needs to be accessible universally to all cooperating teachers so at least all student teachers can have a minimum level of cooperating teacher training for the supervision of their practicum. Zeichner (2002) set forth the concepts that (a) student teaching is a critical aspect of preservice teacher education and cooperating teachers are key participants in determining the quality of learning for student teachers; (b) being a good cooperating teacher is important but not synonymous with being a good teacher, that is, being a good cooperating teacher is more than providing access to a classroom or modeling a particular version of good practice; it involves good mentoring; (c) learning to be a good mentor is a complex and demanding process; and (d) the quality of human relationships is important to the making of a good student teaching placement. The criteria for cooperating teacher selection cannot be based solely on classroom practices, cooperating teachers must be trained in adult learning theory, supervision and

assessment, and reflective conversations. “There is also clear evidence that mentoring student teachers is not often valued as an important activity either in schools or universities. This is demonstrated by the lack of preparation and support for the work, the temporary and marginal status of those who do the work in universities, and the lack of incentives and rewards for doing a good job” (p. 60).

Improved training for cooperating teachers is a recurring theme in the research literature. It is not clear what cooperating teachers have or need as prerequisite skills or training prior to hosting a student teacher. Knowing that cooperating teachers are highly influential on student teachers’ future practices suggests that cooperating teachers need to be highly trained and prepared. Placing student teachers into classrooms of veteran, albeit exemplary, teachers for on the job training, is not enough. The research suggests that cooperating teachers need to be skilled in many areas of reflective listening and collaborative learning, as well as assessment, mentoring and supervision. Enhanced training and support of cooperating teachers needs to be universally accessible to cooperating teachers.

Summary

The trend in the literature indicates concern for teacher quality and student performance. “There is consensus that the quality of teachers and teaching matter – and undoubtedly are among the most important factors shaping the learning and growth of students” (Ingersoll, 2007, p. 1). The variety of articles indicates several views of teacher preparation and the important features of cooperating teacher-student teacher interactions.

The five sections in this chapter reveal current research concerning interactions between student teachers and cooperating teachers (Wilson et al. 2002), the important

roles cooperating teachers play (Whitney et al., 2002), reflective practices that promote transformative teaching practices (McGunn, 2003), the disconnect between theory and practice and the responsibility of the cooperating teacher to provide real-life experiences that connect university course-work and learning to best practices in teaching (Sanders et al., 2005), and the training and support cooperating teachers receive or need to receive in order to be successful mentors of student teachers (Beck & Kosnik, 2000; Clark & Jarvis-Selinger, 2005; Giebelhaus & Bowman, 2002) The research provides a backdrop for the importance of the cooperating teacher and the need for training to assist them in learning and performing their roles pertaining to the mentoring and supervision of student teachers (Weasmer & Woods, 2003).

One overriding finding points to a lack of selection criterion and training of cooperating teachers. Cooperating teachers are classroom experts but do not receive consistent classes, support, or inservices to create baseline competencies for student teacher supervision, evaluation, or mentorship. Without consistent guidelines, cooperating teacher-student teacher pairing has to be done at the whim, albeit with the best intentions, of school districts and university personnel with few specific selection specifics. Cooperating teachers may be outstanding practitioners as well as collaborative adult learning experts, but there is no such requirement, therefore, it is just as likely to have a cooperating teacher who is poorly prepared to facilitate adult learners (Zeichner, 2002).

Often, the clinical side of teacher education has been fairly haphazard, depending on the idiosyncrasies of loosely selected placements with little guidance about what happens in them and little connection to university work. And university work has often been ‘too theoretical’ – meaning abstract and general – in ways that leave teachers bereft of specific tools to use in the classroom. (Darling-Hammond, 2006, p. 308)

The literature indicates that the student teaching experience is a powerful culminating activity in a teacher education program and builds the bridge between theory and practice (Sadler, 2006). The cooperating teacher is an influential role model and has a strong impact on student teacher beliefs and practices. The cooperating teacher-student teacher relationship is collaborative, interactive, and transformative and depends on the personal and professional bonds created during the practicum experience (Beck & Kosnik, 2002; Otteson, 2007). Cooperating teachers have responsibility for modeling observable behaviors and reflective conversations that connect thinking to practice (Danielson, 2002; Ethell & McMeniman, 2002). The cooperating teacher-student teacher relationship is complex and involves training and support for teacher educators. Cooperating teacher selection cannot be based solely on classroom practices, but cooperating teachers must be trained in adult learning theory, supervision, assessment, and reflective conversations. The practicum is an important and pivotal learning experience and student teachers deserve the most highly trained cooperating teachers.

The theories that drive this investigation, Mezirow's (2000) transformative learning theory (TLT), Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory, and cognitive apprenticeship (Collins et al., 1989), are based on the interactions, conversations, and reflections between the student teacher and the cooperating teacher. The reflective practices of the cooperating teacher assist in the development and design of personal teaching pedagogies for the student teachers. The research studied the types of interactions and learning that take place between cooperating teachers and student teachers and what trainings and support are necessary to maximize student teachers' practicum experiences.

This study was interested in the perceptions and training needs of local cooperating teachers, how they functioned and interacted with student teachers, and what training they received or would be willing to receive to hone their supervisory and collaborative skills. The literature indicates a need for this type of investigation.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to examine (a) the role of the cooperating teacher in relationship to his or her assigned student teachers, (b) the cooperating teachers' training and preparation for those roles, and (c) the cooperating teachers' perceived needs regarding training and support. I examined the roles cooperating teachers play in the student teaching practicum and how the cooperating teachers perceive their own needs for training and support to assist and enhance that mentoring supervisory role. I focused on elementary-school teachers who are currently involved, or have been involved, in the Spring or Fall semesters of 2009, in the supervision of a student teacher.

I sought to examine cooperating teachers' roles through the lens of Mezirow's (1992, 1994) transformative learning theory, Vygotsky's sociocultural theory (1978), and Collins, Brown, and Newman's (1989) cognitive apprenticeship. These three theoretical concepts provide a framework for examining cooperating teacher and student teacher interaction and the conceptualization of reflective conversations and knowledge construction. This chapter is organized into 10 sections: research design, population and sample, procedures, protection of human subjects, instrumentation, pilot study, research questions, data analysis, and researcher's qualifications.

Research Design

For this study, I used a qualitative research design to explore the role of cooperating teachers, their perceived training needs, and available support structures. A qualitative research approach is one that seeks to gain understanding by including a holistic view of a specific context. Qualitative researchers often make knowledge claims

based on constructivist perspectives like multiple meanings of individual experiences with the intent to develop a theory (Creswell, 2003).

Qualitative research is an inquiry process of understanding based on distinct methodological traditions of inquiry that explore a social or human problem. The researcher builds a complex, holistic picture, analyzes words, reports detailed views of informants, and conducts the study in a natural setting. (Creswell, 1998, p. 15)

The type of qualitative research that I used was a *basic* or *generic qualitative study* (Merriam, 1998). Merriam described *basic* or *generic qualitative studies* as being used to “seek to discover and understand a phenomenon, a process, or the perspectives and worldviews of the people involved” (p. 11). In education, qualitative research primarily involves exploration of a phenomenon, process, or perspectives in order to gain better knowledge and understanding of what is being studied (Merriam, 1998) so the researcher may conduct an in-depth and detailed examination of the issues (Patton, 1990).

Creswell (1998) described qualitative research design as being used to answer *how* and *why* questions, to explore the topic, and to present a detailed view of the topics. My reasons for choosing a qualitative design are consistent with Creswell’s description. First, qualitative research asks questions starting with *how* or *what*. The questions in this research study are asked to discover *what* cooperating teachers perceive their training and support needs are in relationship to their supervisory role with student teachers and *how* cooperating teachers are provided with training to perform their roles regarding supervision and training of student teachers. Second, the topic of cooperating teacher training needs to be investigated because, as described by Creswell, “The variables cannot be easily identified, theories are not available to explain behavior of participants or their population of study, and theories need to be developed” (p. 17). Minimal research

has explored the training of cooperating teachers; therefore, this study was designed to examine these types of training opportunities. I interviewed 10 cooperating teachers in order to carry out this in-depth investigation. When using in-depth interviews, Creswell (1998) stated that 10 individuals in a study represent a reasonable size. By interviewing cooperating teachers using in-depth investigation, I obtained a detailed view of training needs and opportunities. This qualitative approach is more appropriate than using methods within a quantitative design as it allows for respondents to expand and include a broader range of information.

Initially, I used a questionnaire to gather general background information about the cooperating teachers and to set boundaries and frame the constructs I planned to study (Miles & Huberman, 1994): length of teaching experience, age, number of student teacher placements, school location, training background, and grade-level experiences. I used these survey data to obtain a purposeful sampling of 10 cooperating teachers to interview (Miles & Huberman, 1994). I used an interview protocol to gather and analyze data from 10 cooperating teacher interviews. Interviews were used because they provided an effective method of gathering in-depth data from a greater number of participants. Examining more than a few teacher perspectives allowed me to note preliminary generalizations, such as themes and patterns, that exist in perceptions of cooperating teachers in their roles as trainers and supervisors, as well as their perceived training needs and opportunities. The interview allowed for discussion about what is, and about what might be, while considering best practices and the possibility of change.

Population and Sample

The population for this study was identified as elementary-school cooperating teachers from the San Francisco Bay area. Candidates selected for participation in this study included 10 elementary-school classroom teachers who were currently or recently (within the past 12 months) engaged as cooperating teachers. I focused on elementary-school teachers because that is where I have spent the totality of my 30 years of teaching and my interest and focus are in this area. Additionally, elementary-school cooperating teachers were chosen for this study because as the student teaching practicum evolves over an 18-week full-time student teacher placement, the student teacher actually takes over full classroom responsibility for teaching (USF Teacher Credentialing Program, 2009). In middle school and high school or single-subject placements, the student teacher may assume responsibility for limited classroom teaching by assuming responsibility for 1 or 2 class periods but not the entire day. Middle-school and high-school student teachers also may split their time between two cooperating teachers during the student teaching practicum (USF Teacher Credentialing Program, 2009). Training and support needs might be quite different in middle-school and high-school environments than they are in elementary placements. For these reasons, the focus of this study was on elementary-school cooperating teachers, eliminating the confounding factors introduced by different practicum experiences between elementary-school, middle school, and high-school cooperating teachers.

Cooperating teachers who agree to supervise a student teacher are required to have basic teaching experience requirements. Cooperating teachers, those who host student teachers for their practicum, must have a clear credential, have taught for 3 years,

and must be working in their credentialing areas (State of California Commission of Teacher Credentialing, 2007). For the purposes of this study, only elementary-school cooperating teachers were interviewed.

Nine of the 10 cooperating teachers participants in my study were women ranging from 33 to 65 years of age. The average age of these women was 56 with over 20 years of teaching experience. The one male participant was age 56 with 14 years of teaching experience. There were cooperating teachers representing all of the elementary grades: one kindergarten, one first grade, one first-second grade combination, two third grade, one fourth grade, one fourth-fifth combination, and three fifth grade. The cooperating teachers were from 10 different elementary schools in eight different school districts within the San Francisco Bay Area (see Table 1 below). The first five cooperating teacher participant names were obtained from a state university teacher credential program, and the second five participant names were collected from a private university.

Table 1

Demographic Characteristics of Cooperating Teachers Who Were Interviewed

Participant*	Grade level	Age	Gender	1 st career	Years of experience	Number of student teachers supervised
Ann	3rd	57	F	Yes	20+	4+
Barb	1st/2nd	49	F	No	20+	4+
Cindy	5th	33	F	Yes	11	4+
Debra	Kindergarten	63	F	No	20+	4+
Ed	4th	56	M	No	14	4+
Fay	5th	55	F	Yes	18	4
Gwen	5th	41	F	Yes	17	2
Heidi	1st	65	F	Yes	20+	4+
Irene	4th/5th	61	F	Yes	20+	4+
Judy	3rd	56	F	Yes	20+	4+

*Names of participants have been changed

Protection of Human Subjects

As this study involved human subjects, I applied to the University of San Francisco's Institutional Review Board to obtain approval prior to the study. All research was governed by the ethical principles and standards as set out by the American Psychological Association (2002). I invited cooperating teachers to participate in the study and informed them, in writing, of the purposes of this research project (see Appendix B). All study participants signed a consent form (see Appendix C) prior to beginning the study. All of the site principals signed consent forms acknowledging and approving the use of classrooms for interviews of their teachers.

Each participating cooperating teacher was assigned a pseudonym and was assured and guaranteed confidentiality. All participants were informed, in writing, of their right to withdraw from the study at any time. Interviews were recorded using two recorders to ensure there was a back up in case of any unforeseen technical difficulties. These recordings were locked in secured file cabinets and were transcribed and kept in coded files with passwords known only to the researcher. Once the recordings had been transcribed, the recordings were destroyed. Each participant was given the opportunity to have a transcript of the interview to read prior to publication and was allowed to read and verify the veracity of their interview statements. Creswell (1998) referred to this process as member checking, which allows participants to go back and review the accuracy and the credibility of the account they provided during the interview and provide alternative language if needed. Participants had the opportunity to ensure their intent was portrayed clearly and accurately. Three of the 10 participants availed themselves of this opportunity

and sent corrections, clarifications, and additional information regarding the interview content.

Instrumentation

The data-collection methodologies for this proposed study were a background and screening questionnaire in addition to a standardized open-ended interview protocol. The background questionnaire allowed for purposive sampling and selection of interview participants that represented a range of experience, demographics, and backgrounds (Creswell, 1998). A standardized open-ended interview protocol is defined as an interview protocol that requires the interviewer to adhere to a specific script (Creswell, 2003). The interviewer is not allowed to alter the wording of the script in any way. I chose this interview format because it provided the most structure for the interviewer and reduced the potential bias when the interviewer is a novice and lacks interview experience. It lessened the likelihood of the interviewer becoming distracted or losing one's place if the interview response takes an unexpected turn (Creswell, 2003). In addition, this structured approach to the interview reduces potential bias when the interviewer is conducting the data analysis comparing interviewees' responses to the same question(s) in the same order (Creswell, 1998). The interview design included both specific and general questions starting with the more general and leading to more specific questions. The background and experience questions were completed in the questionnaire so the interview questions dealt directly with the research questions.

The questionnaire consisted of 10 questions (see Appendix D), and the interview protocol for cooperating teachers included 12 questions (see Appendix E). The questions

on both instruments were of the researcher's own design and reflected background information and the study's research questions, respectively.

Pilot Study

I conducted a pilot study with two elementary-classroom cooperating teachers in December 2009 prior to starting data collection for the actual study. The first purpose of conducting a pilot was to investigate interview question relevance and eliminate or reframe any problem questions. The second purpose was to ensure that the questions could be completed within approximately a one-hour timeframe allotted for the interviews. The third purpose of the pilot was to refine my own interviewing skills and to help me to be more comfortable and more natural in the actual one-on-one meetings with the cooperating teachers.

The pilot study consisted of two face-to-face interviews. They were conducted after school and in the participants' classrooms. The interview protocol took approximately 45 minutes to complete. The cooperating teachers used in the pilot agreed to spend a few additional minutes after the interview debriefing about the questions, the intent, and my style. Both of the cooperating teachers received the interview questions prior to our meeting. They were able to review the questions and found them easy to answer and relevant to my study. I kept the questions as they were written and in the same order. The pilot study was a valuable learning experience. I was confident that the interview could be completed in the hour designated in my participant invitation. I also was able to become comfortable with the interview protocol and hone my skills as an interviewer. I became more proficient at the set up of the recorders and the use of new transcription software. When the interviews commenced, I was confident and relaxed.

Procedures

Ten cooperating teachers from San Francisco Bay area elementary schools were included in this study. I contacted the student teacher coordinators from two universities in the San Francisco Bay Area by sending an electronic letter (email; see Appendix A) and asking them to provide me names of cooperating teachers who currently were working with student teachers or had been assigned in that capacity within the past year. The state university provided a spreadsheet of information including student teacher name, cooperating teacher names, school, and grade. There were 112 names included on the spreadsheet. Of those, 10 were interns and seven were in sixth-grade placements. Those 17 names were eliminated from the email list because they did not fit my elementary-school criteria. Emails with the survey questions (see Appendix D) were sent to the remaining 95 cooperating teachers. There were seven undeliverable emails with either incorrect spelling of names or the teachers were no longer with that school or district. Twenty-one of the 88 delivered emails (24%) responded.

At the private university, name collection was more difficult because the school recently had adopted a privacy policy of not releasing cooperating teacher names. Letters were handed out to student teachers to give to their cooperating teacher, and eventually supervising teachers were contacted to help make contact with cooperating teachers. This process resulted in eight volunteers of which five were interviewed.

When names of cooperating teachers were collected, I sent each individual an email questionnaire (see Appendix D). The initial contact was by email, but telephone or mail contact was used to follow-up with nonresponders. After the cooperating teacher

questionnaires were received, I used the data to select cooperating teachers to complete the follow-up interview.

The criteria for selection of interviewees included both novice and experienced cooperating teachers from the two universities that provided contact names. The selection assured representation from different grade levels, schools, and school districts.

The state university cooperating teachers received the email survey first, and five were selected from the 21 surveys returned. The first teacher to respond was my first selection, and then the others fell into place after that. I selected and contacted five names from the spreadsheet, and they all agreed to be interviewed. There was no need to go back to the remaining names and select replacement names. From the private university, I contacted people for interviews as their surveys were returned. I had 12 responses, but five were eliminated because they were high school teachers. Of the remaining seven, I interviewed five of them from different schools and districts. One of the participants taught at a private school, all of the rest were from public schools. Two of the surveys were returned after participants had been selected and interviews scheduled.

The 10 cooperating teachers selected for the interview received a secondary contact by email informing them that they had been selected to complete the personal interview. The email included the Invitation to Participate (see Appendix B) letter containing details of the research. Once the cooperating teachers had agreed to participate, contact was made via phone or email to arrange a mutually convenient time and place to conduct the interview and data collection. The interview questions were provided to the participants by email one-week prior to the scheduled interview. Data

were collected from the participants through approximately one-hour, in-person interviews. All interviews were conducted by me and were audio-recorded.

When I arrived at the school site for the interview, I checked in at the school office, introduced myself to the principal, had a brief discussion with him or her about my research, and had the principal sign the Principal Letter of Consent (see Appendix F). During the initial contact with the cooperating teachers, I informed him or her, in writing, of the purpose of this research study (refer to Appendix E for the complete interview protocol). All participants remained confidential, and each participant was assigned a pseudonym. I placed the participants in order of their interview date and assigned pseudonyms in alphabetical order, A (Ann) through J (Jody). All participants were informed, in writing, of the study expectations as well as their right to withdraw at any time. These expectations and rights were included in the consent form (see Appendix A) that participants were given to read and sign at the start of the interview.

All interviews were recorded and stored in password-protected files. Interview transcripts were coded and stored in locked file cabinets, accessible only to me. One hour interviews took place at the participants' choice, both time and location. All interviews were conducted between January 7, 2010 and February 10, 2010. At the end of each interview, the participant was given a gift card in recognition of their time and effort. Audio-recordings of interviews were transcribed, and I used member checking (Creswell, 2003) by sending transcripts to each participant. Providing the transcripts afforded participants with an opportunity to review and verify the accuracy of the interview information and to elaborate on any of their responses to the interview questions. Three of the 10 participants sent back their transcripts with additional comments and corrections

or clarifications, five responded that they were satisfied with the transcription, and two did not respond. These corrections were then made to the original transcripts. Table 2 is a summary of the member-checking responses.

Table 2
Accuracy of Participant Responses – Member-Checking Summary

Study Participant	Response Date	Changes to document
Ann	January 18, 2010	No changes, satisfied with the document
Barb	January 29, 2010	Editorial changes, removed a section she considered extraneous after the fact, and additive information
Cindy	January 26, 2010	No changes, satisfied with the document
Debra	January 28, 2010	Editorial changes and additive information for clarification
Ed	No Response	
Fay	February 8, 2010	Minor editorial changes and additive information for clarification
Gwen	No Response	
Heidi	February 24, 2010	No changes, satisfied with the document
Irene	February 26, 2010	No changes, satisfied with the document
Judy	February 18, 2010	No changes, satisfied with the document

Research Questions

This study investigated five essential questions:

1. What do cooperating teachers report is their role in the guidance and supervision of student teachers?
2. To what extent do cooperating teachers perceive they are prepared to address the needs of the student teaching practicum?
3. What do cooperating teachers perceive their needs are in respect to training and support?
4. What training and support do cooperating teachers report they received regarding their role as cooperating teacher?

5. To what extent does working with a student teacher transform the teaching practices of the cooperating teacher?

Data Analysis

“The challenge of qualitative analysis lies in making sense of massive amounts of data” (Patton, 2002, p. 432). This analysis involved reducing the amount of raw information, identifying patterns, and finding the essence of what the data reveal (Patton, 2002). Analysis of the data occurred in the following three steps: organizing the data, describing the data, and summarizing the data (Creswell, 2002).

The data-analysis process entailed multiple readings of each interview transcript until patterns emerged that could be identified. The data were organized by coding the data. The transcripts were coded using a marginal coding technique (Creswell, 2002; Miles & Huberman, 1994). The right-hand margins included clarifying or reflective comments, and the left-hand margins included codes consistent with the research questions. This coding technique helped organize the data and allowed me to segment and label the transcripts for the next step in the analysis (Creswell). In addition, a color-coding system was employed to organize data and provide visual representation of emerging patterns. Different ideas or concepts were highlighted with colored highlighting pens and self-adhesive colored dots, and color coordinated Post-It notes were used to mark notes and transcripts (Patton, 2002).

The interview questions generated information in reference to the research questions and were color coded by themes. The cooperating teachers responded to each of the 12 interview questions, and their answers corresponded to the research questions

and emergent themes. Table 3 indicates which interview questions provided data for each of the research questions.

Table 3

Interview Questions that Provided Data for Each Research Question

Research Question	Interview Questions
1	2, 5, 6, 9, 10, 11
2	1, 2, 12
3	8, 9, 11, 12
4	3, 4, 5, 7
5	2, 10

Once I organized the data, I used cross-case analysis to describe the results (Miles & Huberman, 1994). A cross-case analysis was helpful in that it deepened the understanding and explanation of the data by examining multiple cases to identify recurring themes. Identification of these themes can be accomplished by using a meta-matrix. According to Miles and Huberman, “*Meta-matrices* are master charts assembling descriptive data from each of several cases in a standard form” (p. 178). The data were entered into the matrix and then partitioned and clustered into the variables consistent with the research questions. This process of describing the data helped to refine, summarize, and reduce the data into a more manageable format.

The final step of the analysis involved summarizing the data by identifying common themes of the analysis. A data summary table was used to help refine, summarize, and reduce the data so the common themes could be identified. A reliability check of the data was conducted to ensure trustworthiness of the coding procedures. A colleague with 20 years of teaching and administrative experience, most recently an educational consultant specializing in data analysis, read the transcripts and verified the

accuracy of the coding procedures and results. My colleague was provided a packet containing codes, definitions of codes, and the coded interviews. Fifty percent of the transcripts were selected randomly, recoded, and discussed regarding accuracy and theme development. The intercoder agreement was 94%. The few minor discrepancies and problems, those that did not affect coding results or how the themes were organized, were corrected before the findings were reported. Where differences existed, discussion was followed by consensus.

In addition to manual coding of data, I also used the qualitative research software, HyperRESEARCH and HyperTRANSCRIBE, to transcribe, code, and analyze the data. HyperTRANSCRIBE allowed for convenient and quick transcription of audio files. This research software has the capability to work with audio files directly as well as transcripts. HyperRESEARCH enabled the researcher to code and retrieve, build theories, and conduct analyses of the data. It allowed the user to create charts and coding strips to reflect research factors and follow those factors throughout and between interviews. By using this software, researcher error is lessened considerably as keys words, phrases, or codes are less likely to be overlooked.

Researcher's Qualifications

I have almost 30 years of elementary-classroom teaching experience both in California and New Hampshire. I have taught at all levels, Kindergarten (K) through fifth grade and have been a team or grade-level leader at every grade level. I have hosted several student teachers from both public and private universities and colleges and have been involved in working with high-school students interested in pursuing elementary-teaching positions.

In the Livermore school district, there is a committee called Peer Assistance Review/Livermore Education Association (PAR/LEA). This committee oversees the distribution of funds for individual and group staff development for teachers throughout the district. It also pairs referred teachers with classroom mentors or coaches. A referred teacher is a classroom professional who is unable to meet the teaching standards as determined by the school site administrator, or, who can be a self-referred teacher who recognizes a weakness and requests a mentor-coach relationship for a short period of time to improve in a specific area. I am the classroom teacher representative to this committee and have received all of the Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment (BTSA) training. This is a highly confidential committee that is concerned primarily with professional growth for all teachers. PAR/LEA works diligently to assure quality teachers in every classroom and supports venues to assure that teachers are given the support and assistance they need not only in the first years of teaching but also throughout their professional careers. I am an advocate of professional development and a strong believer in education as a lifelong learning experience.

As a doctoral student, I have been very interested in mentoring and the relationships that exist for teacher support in classroom management skills, adult learning, and pedagogical knowledge. During my training in the BTSA program, I spent time studying and using the six California Standards for the Teaching Profession that are generalized to all teachers and include the following categories: engaging and supporting student learning, creating and maintaining effective environments, understanding and organizing subject matter, planning instruction, assessing student learning, and developing as a professional educator (California Standards for the Teaching Profession,

1997). It is the last category that particularly captured my interest; having cooperating teachers who understand all six standards and can help student teachers evolve into effective classroom teachers was the motivating interest behind this research.

Summary

This chapter focused on the methodology, organization, and the process of inquiry for this study. Interviews were conducted with 10 cooperating teachers who described their role in relationship to their student teachers, their training and support, and their training and support needs regarding that role. Cooperating teachers' perceptions of the transformative impact of the cooperating teacher – student teacher relationship informed the study as well. The participants verified the results through member checks. The next chapter presents the study finding and the emergent themes around the research questions.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

The purpose of this study was to examine (a) the role of the cooperating teacher in relationship to his or her assigned student teachers, (b) the cooperating teachers' training and preparation for those roles, and (c) the cooperating teachers' perceived needs regarding training and support. Ten cooperating teachers from different elementary schools in the San Francisco Bay Area participated in the study. Half of the cooperating teachers had student teachers from a local branch of a state university, and the other half hosted student teachers from a private university. I interviewed each of the cooperating teachers and used the coded data to examine and answer the research questions.

Throughout chapter IV, the cooperating teachers are identified and referred to by pseudonyms. This chapter includes the setting, how the research questions were addressed, and the findings. The findings are presented as the emergent themes within the interviews.

The study was conducted at 10 urban and suburban elementary schools in the San Francisco Bay Area. The interview approach allowed me to have conversations with cooperating teachers about their relationships, training, and support needs regarding their student teachers. All of the first 10 cooperating teachers I contacted accepted the opportunity for an interview so a second round of interview selection was unnecessary. Excerpts from the transcripts (interview transcripts are included in the Appendixes) are used to support the findings in each section.

The cooperating teacher is the focus of my study, and the research questions and themes revolve around the cooperating teachers' roles, perceptions, training and support

needs, university training and support, and transformative practices. The use of computer software for transcription and coding, as well as, having a second reader and reliability check, contributed to the accuracy and credibility of this study's findings.

Research Question 1

What do cooperating teachers report is their role in the guidance and supervision of student teachers? Research findings are presented as they relate to emergent themes identified by me regarding this question. Six main themes describing cooperating teachers' roles were identified from the analysis of the data: (a) reflect, encourage, and support, (b) observe and evaluate, (c) provide a bridge between theory and practice, (d) model practice and procedures, (e) develop student teacher's academic skills, and (f) transfer control to the student teacher during the practicum. The sections that follow include explanations of the themes shown in Figure 1.

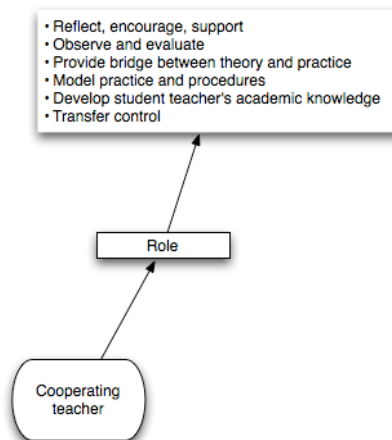


Figure 1. Role of the Cooperating Teacher

In Table 4, the number of responses given by the cooperating teacher is reported.

Reflect, Encourage, and Support

The area of student teacher feedback was a recurring theme in the interview responses from the cooperating teachers. All 10 cooperating teachers who were

Table 4

Cooperating Teacher Responses to Their Roles

Themes	Number of Responses
Reflect, Encourage, Support	10
Observe and Evaluate	10
Provide Bridge between Theory and Practice	10
Model Practice and Procedures	8
Develop Student Teacher's Academic Skills	6
Transfer Control	6

interviewed used the words reflect, encourage, and support in response to interview questions (Appendix E). All of the teachers set aside part of every teaching day to go over questions, concerns, or planning. Most of the teachers used preparation periods during the day to reflect and discuss, but others made time either before or after school to meet with their student teacher, and some even talked during recess breaks. The cooperating teachers all indicated they had a responsibility to ensure a successful and enriching practicum experience and assist their student teachers to become independent and successful classroom practitioners.

Reflection, for the cooperating teachers in this study, consisted of questions and a look back at how the student-teacher-taught lesson went: what was good, what could have been better, how receptive and attentive the students were, and next steps in lesson preparation, planning, and presentation. Sometimes these reflective conversations were done in more formal meetings before or after school but were often held informally in the lunchroom, at recess, or in class while pupils were engaged in other activities. A number of the cooperating teachers mentioned that after school meetings proved difficult because student teachers had to leave to attend university classes, but all of them made sure other time was set aside to reflect and debrief lessons. Debra stated "... if th ey [student

teachers] want to talk to me more, then I am always open to them to come earlier or stay late. In the afternoon they [student teachers] usually have to rush to class. Their time is quite tight.” Cindy agreed “they [student teachers] have class so they’re rushing out the door....so it [conversation] is mostly throughout the day.” Ed spent the prep periods in reflection “because almost always the [student teachers] had classes they had to leave for.” The cooperating teachers who I interviewed all understood the time commitment of having a student teacher and the necessity of setting aside time to answer questions and guide their practice. Fay set aside time to “make sure that those lessons aligned to the standards. Also I would literally jot down notes every time she did a lesson in front of the class and we would sit sit down so I could give her feedback at the time.” Cooperating teachers set aside time daily for reflection and feedback.

Encouragement and support surfaced as important cooperating teacher role. In some form, every cooperating teacher understood the impact of being positive and reassuring. Fay mentioned that she knew she needed to build confidence and self-worth in her protégé and “make it [student teaching] a positive experience for a student teacher in training.” One of the cooperating teachers, Ann, recalled her own student teaching experience and how she was belittled and made to feel like an “underling or gopher,” and she vowed to be supportive and positive as a mentor. She viewed student teachers as professional equals, as part of the teaching team, and colleagues in training. Several of the cooperating teachers stated that reflective conversations should start on the positive and validate student teacher’s efforts and ideas. Barb believed that “They [cooperating teachers] need to be people that [sic] are positive and upbeat and they need to be people that [sic] encourage them [student teachers].”

The 10 cooperating teachers in this study all valued their student teachers' desire to succeed and set up reflection time – many set aside time every day, but all put time aside at least several times every week. Each cooperating teacher knew that support and encouragement were an integral part of their cooperating teacher role. There were no clear guidelines from the universities for the amount of reflection time in the cooperating teacher packets, but they all knew the value and importance of that time to encourage and support the progress of their practicing teachers. The cooperating teachers incorporated reflection, encouragement, and support into their teaching day.

Observe and Evaluate

This theme, observe and evaluate, differed from reflection and feedback in that the cooperating teachers in this study thought of observations and evaluations as more formal assessments of student teacher practice and performance that were often written down and shared with the university supervisor and student teachers. All 10 of the cooperating teachers in this study noted that observations were an important part of their responsibilities and were often done in concert with the student teacher's university supervisor. All of the cooperating teachers understood their obligation to the student teacher and to the university supervisor to complete formal and informal observations. All of the cooperating teachers filled in some type of written evaluation but were also in agreement that final student teaching grading responsibilities were the university supervisors. There was agreement among the cooperating teachers that grades were determined by the university supervisor with their input and observation. Barb summed it up, "you [the cooperating teacher] have input, but you don't give them [student teacher] a grade. That falls on the administrator [university supervisor]."

All 10 of the cooperating teachers used rubrics, either with numbers or words (“met, not met, in progress” or “mastered, not mastered, didn’t see, or still working on it”), and written evaluations. There was no consensus on how often evaluation meetings took place or who was included in those meetings. Some cooperating teachers were included throughout the semester in triad discussions and evaluation meetings, others were included in only a final three-way meeting, and one did not recall ever meeting with the supervisor and student teacher together but just provided the supervisor with evaluation paperwork. In the last case, the supervisor came and observed lessons and met with the student teacher but did not include the cooperating teacher in the meetings. One of the cooperating teachers mentioned that she did not think the input she gave carried much weight, and Cindy stated that “It hadn’t come across where my opinion was that important.” None of the cooperating teachers were aware of the final grades their student teacher received.

Another part of the evaluation process revolved around what happened when a student teacher was having difficulty and not able to meet the cooperating teacher’s classroom expectations. Only one teacher in this study had that trouble, but they were all aware of partnerships that went awry. In the cases where the cooperating teachers were aware of problems, the student teachers were removed and put into other placements. One cooperating teacher expressed her opinion that most unsuccessful placements were personal in nature and were resolved when new partnerships were established. Debra stated that “the university does quite well at filtering out those people – those who are not fit to be teachers” before they are assigned to a student teaching practicum.

All of the cooperating teachers were involved in student teacher observations and evaluations. They gave input to supervisors and to the student teachers about student teacher competence and performance, but none were responsible for assigning grades for the practicum. The observations were reported to be valuable when meeting and discussing lessons with the student teacher. There was a variance in the level and type of input among the triad, but there was agreement that grading responsibility was the university's jurisdiction.

Provide a Bridge between Theory and Practice

The third role that cooperating teachers perform is to provide real-life classroom experiences to bridge pedagogy to practice and to help their novice student teachers create and develop their own personal teaching philosophy and style. This theme resonated with all of the cooperating teachers, as the practicum is the culminating activity that places student teachers in classrooms and immerses them in daily contact with students.

The practicum is the time to put theory into practice; time for student teachers to have a realistic look at what it takes to be responsible for an elementary classroom. Cooperating teachers provided an experiential approach and hands-on time with teaching both curriculum and students. Sometimes this created disequilibrium where student teachers needed to readjust either their theory or their practice.

I do see them [student teachers] having needed a practicum in order to do a good lesson. Many times, also, they are wondering why I'm doing that because in my [university] class it said this ... So, my idea there is that in the class they try to give you as many ideas as possible and as many scenarios and many things, but sometimes you have to do it on your own, or try a different way, or do something else once you get to real life. The class can't tell you everything that's going to happen. (Heidi)

As student teachers became more confident in application of theory to practice, cooperating teachers released more and more responsibility. All of the cooperating teachers worked to initiate their student teachers into the classroom environment and increase their levels of involvement and responsibility throughout their assignment.

Cooperating teachers understand and appreciate the need for creating bridges between university theory and practical application of that theory. All 10 of the cooperating teachers in the study provided opportunities for student teachers to try out their university theoretical learning, and they all gave on-the-job experiences as soon as student teachers showed a readiness. There were some conflicting opinions about the university demands for theory; some cooperating teachers saw the benefit to applying pedagogy to practice, whereas others thought pressure to study and write papers was in conflict and caused frustration. Fay agreed that university course merged with classroom instruction. When Fay's student teacher was working on a paper for the university she "could see what she was doing so there was definitely a bridge between pedagogy and practice."

Ann, however, noted that detailed lesson plans written for the university did not "mesh. I don't see it as beneficial. I see it as detrimental. It [writing lengthy plans] is taking the focus of the student teacher out of the classroom and they really need to be focusing there because they're nervous about being in the classroom – it's a whole new experience. They [student teachers] end up being split, and it creates frustration." Heidi noted a disconnect between university class work and the teaching practicum. She stated that sometimes student teachers need a "practicum in order to do a good lesson" so the course work and the practical experiences are reversed. In general, cooperating teachers

agreed that student teachers need ample opportunities for practical experiences and reflective conversations to build bridges between theory and practice and saw that providing those opportunities was one of their roles and responsibilities.

Model Practice and Procedures

Giving student teachers concrete explicit teaching models was another recurring theme that emerged during the interview process. The cooperating teachers used their own teaching techniques and procedures to model lessons as well as management and organizational and disciplinary tips.

Eight of the cooperating teachers stated that they modeled lessons, student teachers observed, they reflected on observed lessons, and then student teachers were given opportunities to try to teach their own way. Most cooperating teachers stated that student teachers picked up on the cooperating teacher's style because it was established and the easiest way to proceed. The cooperating teachers all stated that they were willing to accept and celebrate different ways and styles of teaching. Ed enthusiastically proclaimed "they [student teachers] bring in new things they're experimenting with ... I say let's give it a go! It's fresh ideas and why not? I don't mind trying new things at all!" Cindy concurred, "I learn from student teachers all the time....It is part of being a better teacher every day." They wanted student teachers to experiment and bring fresh ideas and techniques into the classroom. If the cooperating teacher and student teacher were compatible, there were few issues, but in one case, the student teacher was either unwilling or unable to pick up on modeled lessons, tips, or procedures. Even with explicit direction and assistance, the student teacher's performance did not improve, and the student teacher did not have a successful completion of the practicum in that classroom.

Cooperating teachers modeled not only style, technique, and lesson delivery but also practical tips and strategies ranging from lesson planning to classroom management. Student teachers watched, learned, and picked up on the cooperating teacher nuances. The cooperating teachers were aware of the importance of modeling. As Irene stated, “It [student teaching] helped me be much more aware of my practices because I’m modeling for somebody else and I also have to be careful about ‘do what I say not what I do’ practices.”

The one cooperating teacher, Judy, who explicitly did not use the word model in her interview, gave many instances where she shared her expertise with her student teacher by example. She used modeling without that label.

The practices and procedures that cooperating teachers share with their student teachers are all in preparation for the time when student teachers are able to teach alone in a classroom full of students. The last theme addresses the transfer of classroom control: when the student teacher reaches the time in the practicum when he or she is able to assume full teacher responsibility and take over all aspects of the cooperating teacher’s job.

Develop Student Teacher’s Academic Skills

Elementary-school teachers receive a preliminary multiple-subject credential upon successful completion of the teacher education program. In order to qualify for a Clear credential, they must also complete a 2-year induction program, of which Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment (BTSA) is one model. Cooperating teachers must have taught for at least 3 years and have a Clear credential. Even with this content knowledge training and experience, all classroom teachers need to have content

knowledge of the specific grade-level and subject-matter material. Elementary-school classroom teachers must be familiar with the information in the California Curriculum Frameworks and standards-based instructional materials in all content areas (reading and language arts, mathematics, science, history, social-studies, physical education, health, and the performing arts). These requirements for classroom teachers, in turn, require that student teachers also must have content knowledge in order to present and assess lessons taught in a variety of subjects and at different grade levels. If student teachers are not familiar with content and academic standards when they enter the classroom for the practicum, it becomes the responsibility of the cooperating teacher to ensure that they do so that pupils are given adequate grade-level instruction.

Cooperating teachers' first obligation is to the instructional needs and academic growth of the students. Districts, schools, parents, and students hold teachers accountable for State test scores and teaching the grade-level content standards. Given this background, 6 of the 10 cooperating teachers, in the study, found it necessary to ensure student teachers had complete understanding of academic content knowledge of the lessons they were responsible for teaching.

She would ask me to look at her lessons, and I would give her some feedback and let her know, number one, to make sure that it fits into what is going on in the classroom and the curriculum standards for fifth grade. (Fay)

Cooperating teachers informed student teachers about state standards in these ways: reviewing lesson plans and going over objectives with the student teachers before the lesson, sending materials home with the student teacher to review and prepare prior to presenting the lesson to the students, and spending time giving explicit training in how to access information in teacher's manuals in different subject areas. One cooperating

teacher found that student teachers were untrained in how to use a teacher's manual so she needed to set aside time to teach how to access content information imbedded in the manual margins. There is an abundance of curriculum to cover, and teacher's manuals provide ample suggestions for concept development, but teachers must be familiar with the content standards and academic requirements and be able to discriminate when planning. Two of the cooperating teachers spent time assisting student teachers in analysis of curriculum to identify key standards: those standards most necessary to cover and those ancillary skills that can be assimilated as time allows.

By State law, universities are required to evaluate student teachers by using a teacher performance assessment (TPA). This assessment of teaching performance is designed to measure the candidate's knowledge, skills, and ability in relation to California's Teaching Performance Expectations (TPEs), including demonstrating his or her ability to instruct appropriately all Kindergarten through 12th-grade students in the Student Academic Content Standards. Two of the cooperating teachers found these lengthy assignments distracting to the necessary preparation for the practicum. Ann stated that

The TPA and classroom work are separate entities and it's a university assignment and this is the classroom and what's going on in the classroom and they're not doing this - they are not gelling together - meshing. It's like if you're doing this lesson here, is it tying into what is happening in the university with the TPAs. I didn't see that tie in. I saw it as - I have to get this assignment done for the university and for my whatever "prof" [professor] and write up these detailed lessons plans for the supervisor in here [classroom]. It wasn't meshed.

The other two cooperating teachers found that university coursework was complementary to lesson preparation. Cindy said that the lessons student teachers have to write for the university are "relevant. I think it does go with the [classroom] lesson planning. I think it

[writing up lessons] makes it harder for them, but I think it's important because they need to know all of the different ways out there. It prepares them better.”

The six cooperating teachers in this study who mentioned the need to spend time developing student teacher's academic knowledge all agreed that university coursework did help their students learn how to write lesson plans, but they were not always aligned with the specific lessons taking place in the daily classroom instruction. Knowing the standards and the curriculum and developing academic knowledge help determine what is necessary and important to teach. Cooperating teachers assisted their student teachers in that task.

Transfer of Control to the Student Teacher During the Practicum

The culminating experience in the student teaching practicum is the moment when the student teacher transforms into the classroom teacher for a period of time when the cooperating teacher is not present for any part of the instructional day. The cooperating teachers in this study were all aware that for some amount of time the student teacher would assume teaching responsibilities for the class for the entire day, week, or both. The time frames differed between the two universities and the grade levels, but all student teachers had to take control for at least one week and, in some cases, as long as 3 weeks.

The phrase, “letting go” was mentioned by four of the cooperating teachers. Cindy acknowledged how difficult this part of the cooperating teacher role was, “Some people, it's hard for them to have you [student teachers] come to their classroom – you need to give a little control away.” Letting go is hard to do. Another teacher put it this way:

I think the basic thing is that when you have a student teacher you have to let go - not an easy thing to do. But, that's what you do! I think that's the big message if you ever have a student teacher you have to let them have the opportunity to be successful as well as fail - just like you do your student. . . . but the number one message is - let them go - let them do it, let them try it and figure it out. (Judy)

The one teacher in the study who had difficulty with the performance and capability of her student teacher found this part of her role most challenging. In her case, the university required a 3-week take-over period, so Gwen manipulated the dates to include conference days with abbreviated schedules and a shortened week with holidays. The university supervisor was in agreement with Gwen that this student teacher was not prepared adequately to assume full responsibility of 32 fifth-grade students. As a cooperating teacher, it was Gwen's first responsibility to ensure the safety and academic integrity of the classroom so she had to assume more control over the class rather than less at the end of the practicum.

Four of the cooperating teachers never mentioned the period of time when they relinquished their classes to the student teachers. All of them knew that was an expectation in the training packet, and all of them knew up front that was a "role" they were expected to perform, but they did not talk about that aspect of their experience. Two of the others mentioned it as a fact that the student teachers were expected to take over instruction of the classroom but did not go beyond that in terms of their part in that.

The role of the cooperating teacher has many layers. The cooperating teachers in this study agreed on many of the same responsibilities to their student teachers and each one of them tried to assume those responsibilities, as they understood them. In this section, I examined the role of the cooperating teacher and the six emergent themes, and I address how cooperating teachers are prepared for their roles in the next section.

Research Question 2

To what extent do cooperating teachers perceive they are prepared to address the needs of the student teaching practicum? The second research question is concerned with the preparation of cooperating teachers in their roles with student teachers. The interview protocol addresses this question and the answers have been categorized into two themes: (a) lack of training and prerequisites and (b) experience (see Figure 2). Table 5 contains the number of responses for each of the two themes in Research Question 2.

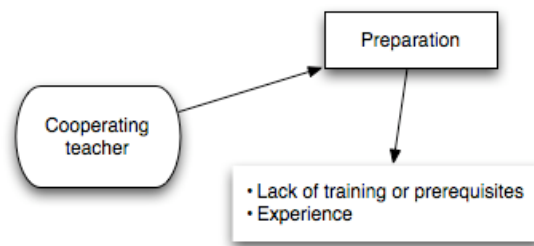


Figure 2. Preparation of the Cooperating Teacher

Table 5

Cooperating Teacher Responses to Preparation

Themes	Number of Responses
Lack of Training	10
Experience	8

Lack of Training or Prerequisites

This theme pertains to training that might be expected or required of cooperating teachers prior to working with student teachers. The interview provided opportunities to explain or mention prerequisites or requirements that would designate tenured teachers as trained for the position of cooperating teacher. The interview was probing for explanations about training that might set cooperating teachers apart from general classroom teachers.

None of the cooperating teachers in this study knew of any screening process or training requirements that were necessary for the selection and assignment of cooperating teachers. Cooperating teachers were aware that the university often initiated the request for cooperating teachers but were not involved in the selection or assignment process. In most cases, principals, upon a request from the university, made the assignment of student teachers to selected cooperating teachers with their mutual agreement and consent.

During the interview, each of the 10 cooperating teachers reported on their selection process for becoming a cooperating teacher. The selection process occurred in these ways: the student teacher requested a cooperating teacher who he or she knew or had met and thought that he or she might like, the principal put out a call for volunteers, or cooperating teachers were requested because previously they had had a student teacher. One of the cooperating teachers suggested she might have been selected because she was a transition teacher for Spanish and limited English speakers, had assisted in many school programs, and showed a willingness to accept extra assignments.

Half of the interview participants, five in all, commented on other nonuniversity training they received that prepared them to be cooperating teachers. Four of the cooperating teachers had been Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment (BTSA) support providers, and two recently had completed administrative credentials; one of the teachers in the interview had been both a BTSA mentor and had completed the administrative credential. BTSA provides training in coaching, evaluation, adult learning theory, and mentoring. These teachers reported that they were aware of TPAs, California Standards for the Teaching Profession (CSTP), and evaluation processes through BTSA.

Ed stated, “Also cycles of inquiry – BTSA is big on that. Data collection and evaluation pieces from BTSA are helpful.”

None of the interview participants were aware of any university or school district criteria for cooperating teacher selection other than the requirements to be credentialed and tenured. They all reported selection was based on personal contact, willingness, principal referral, or personal feelings rather than on a set of prerequisites.

Experience of the Cooperating Teacher

This theme pertains to how cooperating teachers are prepared for the demands of helping a student teacher become a successful practitioner. The cooperating teachers who responded to this theme relied on their own teaching or student teaching experiences to drive the training practices with their student teachers as well as to determine how relationships were established.

Eight of the cooperating teachers stated that at least part of their training for the cooperating teacher role came from their own experience. One stated, “I have all that experience, I think I have a lot to offer.” All of the interviewees had more than 10 years of classroom experience, and nine of them have had more than four student teachers. None of the study participants were novice cooperating teachers, and they all had in excess of the minimum requirements in education and years of teaching. Roxanne explained, “When you’re called ‘master teachers’ it’s because you’re supposed to be experienced.” When asked about preparation, Janet responded, “My preparation is definitely based on my experiences and what I feel like the progression that they, student teachers, need to go through to be successful for placement.” Experience was the dominant response to role preparation for cooperating teachers. After asking what

cooperating teachers view as their role preparation, the next question inquires if further training and support are needed.

Research Question 3

What do cooperating teachers perceive their needs are in respect to training and support? This question focuses on what types of trainings might be valuable to cooperating teachers when honing or developing skills related to the supervision and mentoring of student teachers. The cooperating teachers in this study had a variety of suggestions for further training and support. From the interviews five themes were identified: (a) university classes needed, (b) more university engagement, (c) monetary reimbursement, (d) ideas on pacing of the student teacher take-over, and (e) prescreening and selection of cooperating teacher and student teacher partners (see Figure 3 and Table 6). Table 6 contains cooperating teacher responses in the five themes.

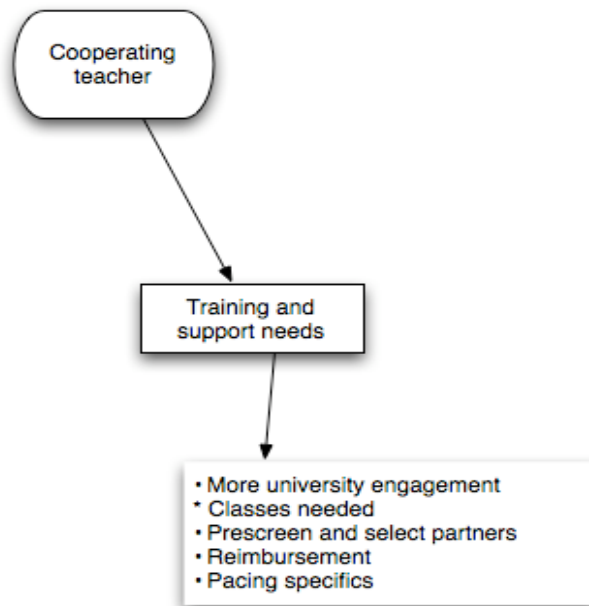


Figure 3. Cooperating Teachers' Training and Needs

Table 6

Training and Needs of Cooperating Teachers

Themes	Number of Responses
More university engagement	8
Classes needed	5
Prescreen and select partners	4
Reimbursement	3
Pacing specifics	3

More University Engagement

Cooperating teachers who addressed this response in the interview noted that their university involvement centered solely on the student teacher supervisor. Cooperating teachers would have a greater connection to the university and to other cooperating teacher participants if they met with professors and university personnel during the student teaching assignment. More university engagement addressed content discussions, practicum outcome expectations, and collegial interactions with other cooperating teachers.

The length and type of university involvement varied among the cooperating teachers and their recall. Often the conversations with supervisors were on the run in the back of the classroom during student teacher lessons, whereas others were more formal with meetings scheduled ahead of time. Most of the cooperating teachers stated that the relationship with the supervisor was primarily with the student teacher and the contact with the cooperating teacher was secondary in both time and importance. The most mentioned time with supervisors was at the final evaluation meeting. One cooperating teacher recalled that she never met with the university supervisor. She was aware that supervisors came for observations but made no effort to speak to the cooperating teacher

at any time during the practicum. In this situation, the cooperating teacher sent written evaluation forms regarding student teacher performance directly to the supervisor, and this method was the exclusive way for sharing information between them.

Some of the cooperating teachers thought they had as much contact as was needed. Fay commented, "I think we (myself and the university supervisor) were in touch as much as we needed to be. I was satisfied with a somewhat more distant relationship. It was good and it was enough."

Nine of the cooperating teachers in this study had successful relationships with their student teachers so university involvement was not an issue. There was, however, agreement that having an ongoing, open, working relationship with the university was vital if there were problems. There was general agreement that contact concerning problems had to be initiated by the cooperating teachers because the university supervisors had minimal daily or even weekly interactions. The comfort level between the university and cooperating teacher becomes tantamount when performance or expectation issues arise. Gwen, who experienced a difficult placement did not feel comfortable contacting the university supervisor until almost 2 months into the placement because they had never met. She indicated that she was awkward and ill at ease to start off with a stranger discussing some very serious and problematic student teacher issues. The problems went unaddressed far too long into the placement for any satisfactory resolution. The cooperating teachers also reported that they seldom were assigned the same supervisor over two placements so they never built a relationship over time.

Debra suggested that the university supervisors should come to the placement sight prior to the practicum's onset so that they could look around and see if the

cooperating teacher is the person they want to place their student with and to make sure she is okay and the environment is appropriate for that student teacher. Debra just does not believe the placement decisions are “individualized enough.” Debra also thinks that university supervisors should have personal contact and understanding of specific placement concerns and issues. She would appreciate more connections with the university.

University engagement is often a balance between sending student teachers out into the world of the practicum alone and being involved enough for all participants in the triad to experience a level of comfort and connection. This relationship, along with others, depends on the level of personalization of the parties involved; for some, the contact was sufficient, and for others, it was not adequate. The level of comfort with university involvement also was dependent on the success, or lack of success, of the placement. Gwen struggled with her student teacher and expressed disappointment with the level of interaction with the university supervisor, but Fay, who had a successful placement, expressed that she seldom saw the supervisor and was satisfied with that level of engagement.

University Classes Needed

During the interview, cooperating teachers revealed some divergent thinking surrounding what might be adequate in terms of classes, requirements, and time spent at the university. Three of the five cooperating teachers who spoke to this issue agreed that university class time that included them with their student teaching partner would be helpful, but that time did not have to be a 3-credit class. They were quick to add that workshops, seminars, and brief meetings would be more beneficial than lengthier classes

taken for units or credits. The cooperating teachers were interested in meetings that assisted ease of role execution but noted their busy schedules and need for quick, easy, useful interactions with the university.

Cindy said

I think if there was a class or a requirement, or maybe you had to take an hour, a little training seminar about how to be a master teacher or what would be the expectations of what a student teacher does. Like that you're expected to help them reflect and you're expected to let them try things and you're expected to show them how to assess kids and other stuff. I think that would have been very helpful.

Another cooperating teacher suggested a seminar or panel approach to resolving issues that occur within the practicum. Judy suggested an experienced master teacher [cooperating teacher] panel that both student teacher and cooperating teacher could attend that would meet for about an hour every other week to discuss issues: what do you need, what are the problems you face, what is going on with your partnership. Judy also suggested that the universities have a meeting day before the practicum starts to

Iron out some of the kinks, like what your [the university] expectations are. Sometimes, as you well know, when you start the school year, you hit the floor running and sometimes those little nuances that you'd like to be able to explain to people just don't get explained if you haven't met them [your student teacher] before.

Cooperating teachers know that, when a student teacher appears in the room on his or her first day of the practicum, there is no time to resolve some of those up-front issues such as basic introductions, expectations, and even logistics like where to hang your coat or where the bathroom is. The classroom environment is not conducive to adult discussions, meetings, or problem solving. Having the university provide time to meet before the first day of class was thought to be helpful and productive.

For those teachers who spoke to the issue of classes or trainings, one of the key components was for the university to be clear and consistent with requirements and goals. Time to meet and establish standards and expectations needs to be set aside and required or it just does not happen. There was agreement that teachers are busy with full schedules. Extra demands on time need to be productive and worthwhile. Heidi suggested

Maybe a meeting or going to a meeting of a group and having things presented, possibly, in a class and getting good feedback on the goals of the university in general and getting to know the school a little bit better. That might help me; however, I appreciate not having to go to that as well. Having them feel that reading the material and meeting the student teacher is satisfactory enough for them as well. It might give me a space in order to plan and integrate things a little better or visualize how it might be rather than to have it happen so quickly.

Two of the cooperating teachers mentioned that classes or meetings might be okay but were added demands and both of them were okay with the status quo. The same two cooperating teachers thought that there was a necessary time for adjustment to a new placement. Class time and prior meetings might alleviate some problems, but some issues were inevitable and needed to be dealt with inside the partnership.

For those appreciating the value of university classes, there was consensus to make them short, meaningful, practical, and convenient. Busy cooperating teachers want their time to be valued, but they also want to be prepared and informed about their responsibilities and expectations regarding their student teacher.

Prescreening and Selection of Cooperating Teacher and Student Teacher Partners

The theme concerning screening of partnerships was mentioned by four of the interview participants. The pairing of student teachers with their cooperating teacher speaks to a level of necessary compatibility for the intimate relationship of sharing a workspace and teaching responsibilities. One of the interviewees spoke about her student

teaching experience and the value of partner compatibility that she experienced from that vantage point.

Fay spoke at some length during our interview about the necessity for partners to be allowed to choose. In her own student teaching placement experience, Fay was able to observe in several classrooms and then select her own cooperating teacher. She based her selection on her comfortable level with the room environment and the style of the cooperating teacher. During that selection process, she was allowed to say “I just didn’t feel like that was the type of person that I wanted to be around every day if I had to share teaching.” That selection process worked for her, and she is an advocate of that system. The placement she most recently had was an agreement with the university and a request by the student teacher; it was not a typical university assignment.

Another cooperating teacher, Cindy, also agreed that having a compatible placement is paramount. She did, however, admit that universities do a reasonable job of matching partners up on their own. She would like a better screening process and more university involvement in this regard.

Cindy also responded to the advantages of prearranged partnerships. Cindy would love to

Match people up – I think it’s really important. Even some of the great teachers that I know who take on student teachers sometimes have problems with it because it is hard to have another person in your classroom – that’s your baby! I would love to try to match people up with each other. I think it’s important – not that you get along with your master teacher, but that you feel comfortable with each other ... to succeed and learn from each other for both the master and the student teacher.

This theme had four cooperating teacher responses, but those four were very passionate about the placement process. The problems that they observed in other

placements led them to the conclusion that problems and failures were often due to partners not being compatible in some way. They also indicated that prescreening or self-selection of partnerships might avoid some of those problems.

Monetary Reimbursement

The theme of monetary reimbursement encompasses more than just cash payments, it also includes course reimbursement, course price reduction, or paid release time for meetings involving student teacher placement. Cooperating teachers spend a long period of time with student teachers but compensation was rarely a consideration for volunteering to do the job.

There was a wide variance of teacher responses to this topic. Most of the teachers could not remember the amounts of money they received or even if they were paid. Many were unsure where the money came from. Some thought they were reimbursed through BTSA, some thought that the university paid the school districts and that the districts could pass that payment along to teachers or not, but most thought they were not paid any monetary amount.

Debra, when asked about personal compensation, said she had never received any, did not expect anything, and was “just happy to do it. I get a lot – the real reward is intrinsic.” Another interviewee, Irene, echoed that response, “I don’t believe I was ever given any compensation, I didn’t expect any.” Fay received a verbal “thank you” and that was sufficient.

Ed mentioned that he was never paid instead may have been offered a tuition-free class or workshop but never availed himself of that opportunity. Another response about

being paid came from Barb who said, “No, never. It would have been nice. The student teacher always did something nice for both the students and me.”

All of the participants in this study agreed to be cooperating teachers for reasons other than money. They were vague about amounts and details involved with monetary rewards. For those who had some memory of payments, they ranged from \$60 to \$250 for a semester.

Ideas on Pacing of Student Teacher Take-Over

This theme centers on issues of getting student teachers ready to take over all classroom responsibilities in a timely manner so that they are prepared when that time arrives toward the end of the placement. The pacing of lessons and responsibilities can vary from placement to placement. How and when do cooperating teachers know that the student teacher is ready to go on and how do they decide when there is a problem that dictates slowing down or stopping the process.

There are timelines and deadlines along the way for student teacher participation, but there were three cooperating teachers who expressed the need for more guidance or assistance in this area. Ann, who was working with a novice cooperating teacher at her school site, said that “Because she’s never had a student teacher before she doesn’t really understand that student teachers also have things they have to get done for the university and other things. So she is not comprehending the pacing and the expectations yet.”

Two of the cooperating teachers were concerned that individual concerns were not addressed in terms of student teachers who were not ready but might be if given more time. The pacing of the student teacher take-over is left totally to the discretion of the cooperating teacher. If there were no problems, then the timeframes outlined in the

university information packet were met, but two cooperating teachers indicated that they were abandoned by the supervisors when placements became problematic. Classroom teachers were unwilling to turn over classroom instruction to ill-prepared or unready student teachers. Cooperating teachers indicated that they were reluctant to report problems, wanting to resolve concerns at the classroom level.

Gwen was frustrated with the pace of the instructional take-over by her student teacher and finally contacted the supervisor, but it was already quite late in the placement. Gwen stated that school starts in her district in mid-August and “by the time I did a midterm one [evaluation] about early October for her [student teacher], there were some issues and I think I’d seen the supervisor once at that point or maybe not at all.” Gwen added, “Things didn’t really improve.” It was at that point that the supervisor shared that this student teacher had experienced a problematic first placement as well. The cooperating teacher indicated that the supervisor should have been more forthcoming about that information before there was a bigger issue. Gwen admits she was never informed of the outcome when the student teacher finished her placement. She believes she graduated but was unable to find a job.

Learning how to plan out the semester with a student teacher is a challenge and for three of the interview participants it was an area they indicated more university involvement and oversight was needed. Many of the more experienced cooperating teachers did not view planning as a concern, but several participants brought up consideration of standardizing procedures.

This section was devoted to the presentation of teacher training and support needs. The five emerging themes were presented. In the next section, I address what teachers currently receive for training and support.

Research Question 4

What training and support do cooperating teachers report they receive regarding their role as cooperating teacher? This question refers to specific classes, trainings, or support that cooperating teachers receive from the supervising university while the student teacher is working in the classroom or before or after the practicum is completed. In response to this question, three themes emerged: (a) lack of support, (b) information packet, and (c) conference with supervisors at the end of the practicum (see Figure 4 and Table 7).

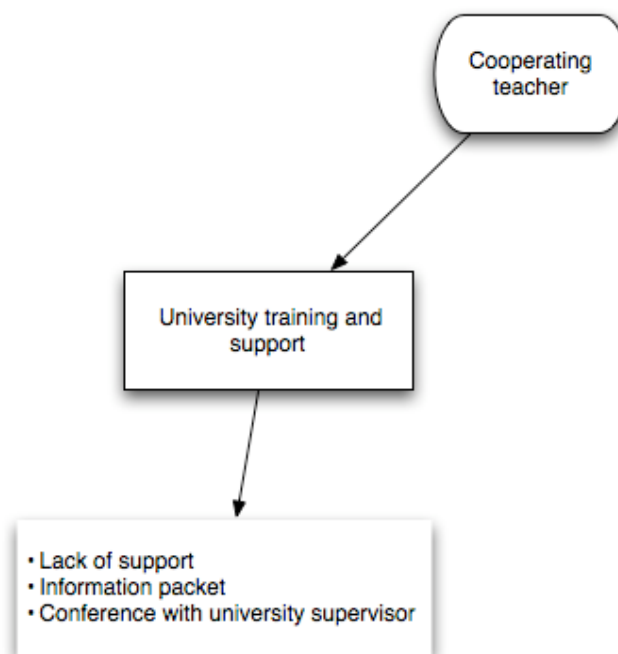


Figure 4. University Training and Support of Cooperating Teachers

Table 7

University Involvement with Cooperating Teacher

Themes	Number of Responses
Lack of Support	10
Information Packet	10
Conference Time - Meetings	10

Lack of University Support

The focus of the interview findings around this theme examined the lack of university involvement and participation in the workings of the practicum. For some cooperating teachers, university support is weak and, at times, nonexistent. There is a nonsupervisory person at the university responsible for making student teacher placements, but beyond that assignment, they have no further interaction with the triad partners. Supervisors are reported to come to the placement site long after the placement begins and have most of their time and energy supporting and evaluating the student teacher. Often cooperating teachers indicated that they were disconnected and even estranged from university contact. When asked about contact with the university during the student teacher placement, Fay commented that “I don’t remember having any contact; honestly, it was very little if any.” Irene agreed, “I didn’t see the supervisor very often.”

When reflecting on how student teachers are introduced or placed, the consensus among the cooperating teachers is that usually student teachers just show up on the first day of the placement and report to the office. Sometimes, but not always, the cooperating teachers are given the student teacher’s name. Motivated student teachers occasionally make an email or phone contact prior to the first day, but the university had no active part

in assuring that partners meet and know each other before the assignment officially begins. For classroom teachers, not knowing their new student teaching partner can be a distraction as the busy beginning of the school day commences. If introductions were made prior to the placement that was perceived by cooperating teachers as a chance occurrence brought about by the initiation of the student teacher and had no foundation in university policy or procedure. Debra affirmed, “The university has never been involved in getting the student teacher together with the cooperating teacher.” Ed agreed that “the student teacher made the contact. The university did not.”

The perception is that the university supervisor is there to assist and evaluate the student teacher and that often made cooperating teachers believe they had limited options to seek support or help. Irene said that “her [student teacher] supervisor came down several times to do observations of her lessons. There wasn’t any feedback with me [cooperating teacher]. She [the university supervisor] came into the classroom, and she observed, and she gave feedback directly to the student teacher.” Fay agreed, “She [university supervisor] met with the student teacher – they had contact, but I didn’t have much.” All of the cooperating teachers had information for contacting supervisors but expressed reluctance to use it. Other individuals to contact, outside of the supervisor, at the university did not exist. Ed stated, “The only person that [sic] I really had contact with would be the student teacher’s supervisor. I never really had any other contact with the university at all.” Irene echoed that, “I don’t recall having any contact with anyone other than the supervisor.”

University supervisors tended to communicate with cooperating teachers through messages relayed by the student teachers. There was little or no reported direct

communication between the supervisor and the cooperating teacher unless there was a problem. Gwen added, “The university was not involved.” If things were going smoothly, or assumed to be going smoothly, the perception was that the university had little interest in an ongoing support relationship. There was a general feeling on the part of the cooperating teacher of benign neglect from the university. Fay said that “we [cooperating teacher and university supervisor] didn’t really talk a lot. I don’t know if we needed to or not, but I suppose especially if things were going well you don’t really have to talk that much to them.” Fay also said, “The contact was mostly between the student teacher and the supervisor and not me.”

General Information Packet Provided by the University

This theme centers on how cooperating teachers receive information about the practicum requirements and their classroom and evaluation responsibilities. All 10 cooperating teachers mentioned a handbook or packet being given to them by the student teacher on the day the placement begins. This section presents how cooperating teachers perceive the information in the packet and the way and timeliness in which it is received.

All of the interviewees in this study received some type of informational packet from the university via their student teacher. Eight stated that they were expected to go over the packet on their own and figure out deadlines and expectations. Because six of the student teachers had no contact with cooperating teachers before the practicum started, the cooperating teachers perceived that this information came too late especially if you were a novice cooperating teacher. Janet said she is prepared for a student teacher “primarily from experience,” but the new cooperating teacher next door “gets the packet and talks to her student teacher, and it will be sort of hit or miss.” When asked if there

was any training for cooperating teachers, Janet responded, “No, it’s, here’s your student teacher and here’s her part [the informational packet].” Most cooperating teachers relied on the student teacher to fill them in on university requirements and due dates. Gwen admitted that her student teacher gave her, “a lot of misinformation.” Conversely, Fay’s student teacher

Kept me abreast of how much time she had for lessons, when she needed to have it so that she would have time to prepare for it ... She would always let me know when she went to class if something was coming up and she needed to have time to prepare for it.

For three cooperating teachers, the expectation to read that packet on their own was unrealistic. Judy stated, “The expectation is that I read them [the expectations] myself at my leisure to know what my responsibilities are and what I’m supposed to do.” All of the participants in this study were experienced cooperating teachers and knew about the informational packet from previous student teachers. Ed stated, “Some of the requirements are the same year to year.” The information books are updated “every other year or even less often.” Cooperating teachers asked the student teachers to fill them in on information as needed. As Heidi stated, “she [the student teacher] showed things that she was doing and what the expectations were and what she would need to do.” The information packets provided expectations and timeframes and the student teachers answered questions and were responsible for deadlines.

Conferences Held with University Supervisors

Meetings with supervisors emerged as a theme for the training and support of cooperating teachers. In this section, cooperating teachers shared insights into triadic meetings and meetings with the university supervisor. The observation and evaluation meetings conducted throughout the semester were often done between the supervisor and

the student teacher and the cooperating teacher only attend if he or she was available. The final evaluation meetings were held late in the semester and were often the only meeting attended by all members of the triad.

One cooperating teacher reported not having any contact with the supervisor at any time. Debra stated, “I don’t even remember having a supervisor come in at all, and I had two student teachers in one year.” She stated that her only connection to the university was a written evaluation form that was sent to her to be filled out and returned. This situation was unusual, but many cooperating teachers reported very limited interactions with the university supervisor. The most often reported contact was at the final evaluation when information and observations were needed to complete culminating paperwork. The views on these final inclusive meetings were mixed; some indicated limited contact was okay, whereas other indicated this process was too hands-off and wanted more interaction. Some of those opinions about attending evaluation meetings revolved around the success or problems of the student teacher.

All 10 of the cooperating teachers did have contact with university supervisors albeit one cooperating teacher never had personal contact but rather had contact through written evaluations. Seven of the ten cooperating teachers thought it came too far removed from the beginning of the practicum. Gwen stated, “We start [the school year] in early August ... She [the student teacher] came by the second week to observe then started in the classroom. I didn’t see anyone from [private university] until mid to late September.” Ed commented that the supervisor met with whoever was available after the lesson. Sometimes the supervisor met with him (the cooperating teacher), and sometime the supervisor just met with the student teacher, the “three-way conversation took place at

the end of each of the placements.” Barb agreed, “You sit in at the end [of the semester] on the final evaluation.” Judy met with the supervisor periodically throughout the practicum but never was able to schedule a three-way meeting because of conflicting schedules; the three of them (supervisor, cooperating teacher, and student teacher) were never all available at the same time. Fay agreed that the supervisor gave the student teacher feedback but did not remember “that part [a three-way meeting]”. Nine of the cooperating teachers in the study had positive and successful practicum experiences, but the one cooperating teacher who had a struggling student teacher perceived the need for more university involvement and evaluation earlier in the semester.

This theme had the most responses, but the perceptions around those responses were quite different. All 10 of the cooperating teachers received information through the student teacher; some thought that was adequate, whereas others thought they would have liked more personal contact with the university supervisor. According to cooperating teacher responses, if the student teacher was doing a credible job in the classroom, then the need for contact with the supervisor was minimal. Fay stated, “If things are going well you don’t really need to talk that much to them.”

Research Question 5

To what extent does working with a student teacher transform the teaching practices of the cooperating teacher? This research question refers to the transformative power of collaboration and reflective conversations. The question examines the extent to which cooperating teachers classroom practices are changed and enhanced during the practicum. The responses yielded three ways in which cooperating teachers are

transformed. These themes emerged: (a) builds relationships, (b) keeps abreast of current practice, and (c) collaboration (see Figure 5 and Table 8).

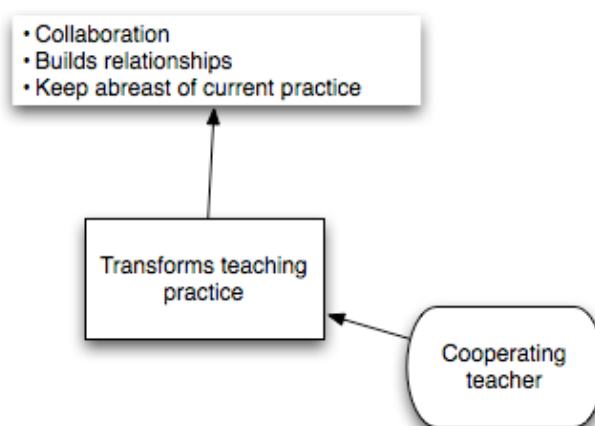


Figure 5. Cooperating Teachers' Transformation during the Student Teaching Practicum

Table 8

Transformative Practices for Cooperating Teachers

Themes	Number of Responses
Collaboration	10
Builds Relationships	9
Keep Abreast of Current	6

Collaboration and Collegial Support

This theme highlights the cooperating teachers' desire for discussion and support during the teaching day. Sometimes a nod of agreement or a knowing look helps both novice and experienced teachers sense whether things are going well or a change is needed. Having a knowledgeable other person in the room is reassuring and empowering.

Even though student teachers are inexperienced, cooperating teachers found value from collaborating with novices in the practice of teaching.

I learn from student teachers all the time. I tell them I make mistakes every day, and I'm sure you'll catch them. But, that is a part of growing and being a better

teacher everyday. You're never the best, you're always growing, and you're always becoming better. (Cindy)

Some cooperating teachers viewed the practicum as a learning experience for themselves. Heidi acknowledged that "When student teachers are going to their classes it's interesting for me to keep current on what they're being taught and what their ideas and approaches are." Shared knowledge and common experiences create bonds between these partnerships of cooperating teachers and student teachers.

Several cooperating teachers used the term, "another set of eyes" to describe the collaboration with another teacher. Ed stated, "Two heads are better than one and when you have two adults in the here I can get twice as much learning going for my students." Barb agreed with that concept when she said having a teaching partner enabled her to work more individually with children and differentiate instruction more effectively.

Ed stated that being a "good mentor teacher is vital to education. This is the place ... the test tube to try things out." Working through new ideas, talking things over, and sharing concepts strengthens both the student teacher and the cooperating teacher. Barb added that including a student teacher in your classroom also adds a reflective quality to your own teaching as you "see yourself come out of someone else."

Building Professional and Personal Relationships

Team building and professional relationships were recurrent themes during the interviews. For most teachers, their instructional days are spent with children and devoid of adult interaction outside of a brief lunch break. During a student teacher practicum, however, there is another adult present to plan, share, and work together. Ed stated, "I just enjoy having someone else in here." He highly regarded the validation of another adult during the day. Judy found the cooperating teacher – student teacher relationship

energizing; she likened it to a facelift. Being around a new, enthusiastic, and knowledgeable partner is stimulating and exciting.

Having a partnership helped cooperating teachers to be less cynical, to be more positive, and to make the day-to-day teaching practices more fun, enjoyable, and relaxing. Barb admitted that “It’s enjoyable to have that extra person around.” Debra agreed that the partnerships build relationships that last over time. She is still in contact with student teachers who were assigned to her many years ago. They are peers now, sharing materials and ideas, and have a lasting friendship.

Two of the cooperating teachers suggested that they were more organized and aware of their own best practices because they were sharing with novices who were watching and picking up on content as well as style. Heidi stated that having a student teacher “helps me also meet the elements of the lesson and I’m more conscious of my own lesson planning.” Professional skills are sharpened for both participants: they help each other be the best they can be. It is a mutually beneficial relationship. Fay concurred that being a cooperating teacher makes you more mindful of what you are doing and more aware of doing what you are asking and expecting the student teacher to do. Being a cooperating teacher is like holding up a mirror to your professional behavior.

Keeping Abreast of Current Practices

Being current with educational practice was another theme that appeared during the interviews. Cooperating teachers often found hosting a student teacher was a way to learn new methodology without having to go back to school and take classes themselves. One cooperating teacher admitted to requesting student teachers frequently.

That’s the only reason I do it over and over again - because they [student teachers] are fresh out of school, and they know all the new strategies and new

things that are coming up next or refreshing my memory of things that I know I forgot. (Cindy)

Some cooperating teachers viewed the practicum as a learning experience for themselves because “When student teachers are going to their classes it’s interesting for me to keep current on what they’re being taught and what their ideas and approaches are.” Ann admitted to a 30-year teaching career and stated that when things get “old hat” a new student teacher comes in with all of his or her excitement. New pedagogy and teaching techniques make lessons richer and more accessible to all students. Ed stated that “They [student teachers] bring in new things they’re experimenting with or [have] heard of up at [state university]. I say, ‘let’s give it a go! It’s fresh ideas [sic] and why not? I don’t mind trying new things at all.’ Barb added that “You’re always learning. As far as discipline or curriculum ... they will come up with things.”

The cooperating teachers who responded to this theme recognized the benefit of having a direct connection with the university and the most current research and theory. They were realistic enough to know that not all of the theories work seamlessly in the actual classroom environment. Ed commented that he was never shy about taking back the reins if a lesson got side tracked or the application of a technique misfired. The cooperating teachers recognized the experimental nature of the student teaching practicum. Cindy said she wanted to be like her master teacher and “encourage them and let them try things.” Ann noted “They’re [student teachers] are all fired up and they’re asking to try this and try that and they bring a lot of new, different kinds of lessons that I enjoy watching.” Ann added, “I learn from them too.”

Summary

The results presented in this chapter addressed the five research questions that were the basis of this study and how these questions revolve around and focus on cooperating teachers. The cooperating teacher is the central character in this study and central in Figure 6, which depicts the connections between the cooperating teacher, the research questions, and the emergent themes. The research questions surrounding the cooperating teacher elicited themes that define and explain the cooperating teacher's roles, preparation, support and training, university involvement, and subsequent transformation based on the student teaching practicum experience.

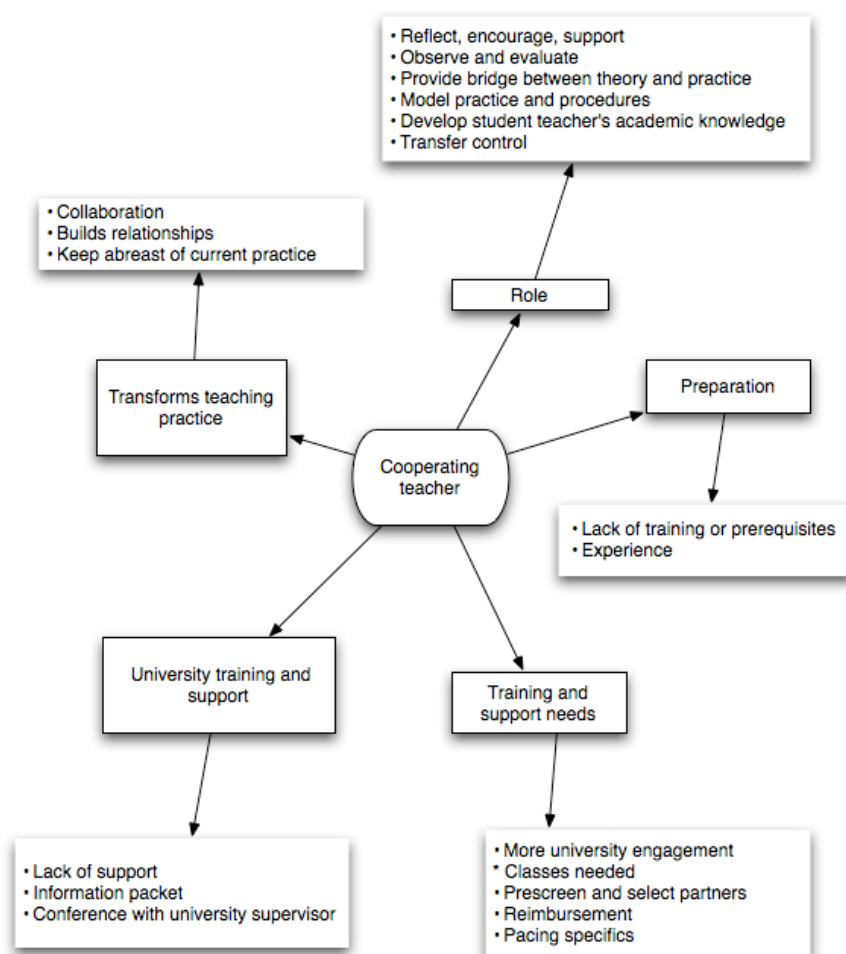


Figure 6. Research Questions and Themes Surrounding Cooperating Teachers

There were 10 cooperating teachers from San Francisco Bay Area elementary schools who answered 12 interview questions regarding their roles, preparation, needs, and transformations as mentors to university-placed student teachers. On the basis of cooperating teacher responses to the interview, themes emerged and were reported in this chapter. Further discussions relevant to those themes are presented in chapter V.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, LIMITATIONS, DISCUSSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this qualitative study was to obtain an understanding of the perceptions of elementary-school cooperating teachers in the San Francisco East Bay regarding their roles, preparation, and training and support needs in relation to the supervision and mentoring of student teachers. It was assumed that one-on-one interviews with the cooperating teachers who participated in this study would provide an opportunity for the teachers to provide a perspective on their experiences and reflect on their practices in assisting student teachers to become successful and independent practitioners. Major themes emerged from the data analysis in response to the five research questions. This final chapter contains an overview of the study, a summary of findings, limitations, discussion, recommendations for future research, recommendations for practice, and conclusions.

Summary of the Study

This study focused on cooperating teachers: their roles, preparation, needs, and support regarding their relationship with student teachers. The factors that gave rise to this study included increased demands for teacher accountability, an increase for higher tests scores indicating minimum student performance, and university requirements to develop professional training for cooperating teachers (Commission on Teacher Credentialing, 2007, p. 1). Through the passage of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (2001), known as No Child left Behind Act (NCLB), there has been a national increase in educational accountability and a demand for “highly qualified teachers” in every classroom. With the demand for educational reform, the educational

training facilities, or universities, face the challenge of providing inclusive teacher preparation programs, comprehensive practicum experiences, and more training for cooperating teachers.

The research questions in this study were designed to explore issues concerning several aspects of cooperating teacher training, preparation, and transformation. The 10 one-on-one interviews inform the study about cooperating teacher – student teacher social interactions and discourse and how those interactions and conversations effect and transform cooperating teachers practices. There were 12 interview questions framed to address teacher roles, preparation, training, training needs, and the transformation of teaching practices based on interactions with student teachers. The answers to these questions were coded, and 19 themes emerged regarding the five research questions. After the results were coded and analyzed by the researcher, an independent judge read and coded one-half of the interviews to provide a check for reliability. This research used a qualitative perspective and relied solely on interviews.

Summary of the Findings

The aim of my study was to investigate the perceptions of cooperating teachers regarding their roles, preparation, and needs in relationship to the student teachers they have hosted and supported. This study additionally examined how cooperating teachers were transformed by the practicum experience and the interactions and conversations between the cooperating teachers and their student teaching partners. The interview process provided opportunities to explore the research questions and encouraged cooperating teachers to reflect on their experiences. The analysis and coding of the data

led to emergent themes related to each question. In this section, the initial research questions are revisited and addressed by the study findings.

The first research question asked cooperating teachers to report their perceptions of the roles they played in the guidance and preparation of student teachers. Cooperating teachers described and reflected on their roles in six distinct performance categories. There was concurrence from all 10 participants in the study that they were responsible to reflect, encourage, support, observe, evaluate, and provide experiences that bridge pedagogy to practice. Eight of the 10 cooperating teachers considered themselves role models for practice. Being aware and knowledgeable of best practices during their own teaching was mirrored in the practices of their protégés. Six of the 10 cooperating teachers considered that assisting student teachers acquire academic knowledge and skills and allowing them to independently apply those skills in teaching lessons as they ultimately take control of the classroom were parts of the essential role they performed.

The second research question was concerned with the perception of how cooperating teachers were prepared for the roles they attested to perform. The responses to this question indicated a lack of training and a reliance on experience. None of the participants reported an awareness of prerequisite skills for becoming a cooperating teacher, and none of them received any training for that position. One-half of the cooperating teachers in the study had received training from other sources, Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment (BTSA) and administrative credential programs, that supported the work performed as cooperating teacher.

The third research question was designed to probe into what cooperating teacher perceived their needs were regarding training and support for their roles. The responses to

this question were more divergent. Participants responded in these ways: eight of the participants viewed more university engagement as a positive approach to training: five wanted classes, workshops, or seminars, four suggested prescreening when partnering student teachers with cooperating teachers, three responded that assistance with specific pacing guidelines would be helpful, and three thought monetary incentives would be appreciated. The type of classes or workshops the respondents described must be convenient, short, specific, and timely. Five of the cooperating teachers also thought classes that connected and included the student teachers would have great value.

The fourth research question inquired into the types of training and support cooperating teachers currently receive. The responses to this question were consistent. All of the cooperating teachers in this study reported receiving a training packet from the university with performance expectations for all of the triad participants. The participants also agreed that university training was nonexistent and that university involvement or support was more likely with a problematic student teacher placement than when things were going smoothly. Cooperating teachers were included in evaluation conferences when it was convenient or as schedules allowed but were most likely to be included in the final evaluation of the semester if at all.

The final research question was designed to examine the transformation of cooperating teachers that was precipitated by involvement with their student teachers. All of the interviewees indicated that they were transformed by the collaborative nature of the cooperating teacher – student teacher partnership. The cooperating teachers expressed a mutually beneficial relationship whereby both partners were enriched through their connection to the other partner. Nine out of the 10 cooperating teachers valued the

relationships that were established, and six acknowledged being able to stay current with the most recent theory and pedagogy. Cooperating teachers' involvement with student teachers provided opportunities for ongoing transformation and change through reflection and collaboration.

The research questions in this study were formulated to reflect an overview of the practicum roles and training from the vantage of the cooperating teacher. There was evidence from the interviews that cooperating teachers perceived themselves as performing many roles relying primarily on their own skills to perform them with little or no outside support or training.

Limitations of the Study

Limitations are part of all research as there are some variables that cannot be controlled. There are several limitations to this proposed research study. Small sample size and limited geographical area reduced the generalizability beyond the San Francisco (SF) Bay Area. I have included cooperating teachers who have had student teacher supervision within the past 12 months, which may introduce elements of effective recall. The sample only included elementary-school cooperating teachers so other grade levels may encounter different responses. Generalizability also applied to the university and college findings, as many supervision and course requirements may vary outside of the SF Bay Area or California. Although generalizability is not a primary concern of qualitative research (Miles & Huberman, 1994), it is important to understand how the results relate and apply to other cooperating teachers and university student teacher training programs.

Another possible limitation in this study may have been the lack of range in the experience levels of the respondents. There were no interviews with first-year or novice cooperating teachers. On questions trying to explore training needs, answers may have been different with less experienced participants. There were few respondents who had difficult or challenging student teacher placements; therefore, 9 of the 10 participants in the study did not experience problems or a need for university intervention or support. They all, however, referred to knowledge of problematic or unsuccessful practicum experiences with colleagues, but those responses were more speculative in nature.

Researcher bias poses a threat in qualitative research studies. I attempted to reduce this bias by applying *basic* or *generic qualitative study* procedures and engaged in rigorous and systematic data collection and data analysis. In addition to manual analysis of data, I also used qualitative data software, HyperRESEARCH, to classify, sort, arrange, and analyze data. A second reader randomly selected five interviews and, after discussion of coding and themes, did an independent coding. Results were compared, and there was consistency in coding of themes and high intercoder reliability of 94%.

Because of the qualitative nature of this study, the findings could be interpreted in other ways than are described. Minimizing this threat was attempted through member-checking, clarification bias, peer review of the coding process, and strategies recommended by qualitative researchers and discussed in chapter III.

Discussion

This study intended to examine the perceptions of elementary-school cooperating teachers in the San Francisco Bay Area who facilitated student teachers in the practicum experience. The questions probed into the descriptive roles of the cooperating teachers

and the ways they were prepared, or needed to be prepared, to perform those roles.

Believing that the cooperating teacher is the central figure in teacher triad, I interviewed them to glean the ways they were prepared or needed to be prepared to fulfill their commitment. Secondly, I was interested in how the practicum experience changed, enhanced, or altered cooperating teachers practices or beliefs.

Several studies (Anderson, 2005; Borko, 1996; Bullough, 2004; Clarke, 2006; Flowers, 2006; Glenn, 2006; Sudzina, Gielbelahus, & Coolican, 1997; Wilson, Floden & Gerrini-Mundy, 2002) expressed the importance of the student teaching experience and the pivotal role the cooperating teacher plays. Whitney, Golez, Nagel, and Nieto (2002) reported that the greatest impact on a student teacher's future teaching practices came from the cooperating teacher. The importance and impact of the cooperating teacher on the practicum cannot be overlooked.

Research question #1: "What do cooperating teachers report is their role in the guidance and supervision of student teachers?" The intent of this question was to elicit the range of all aspects of the cooperating teacher roles and responsibilities. Themes that emerged from this investigation included (a) reflect with, encourage, and support student teachers during the semester; (b) observe and evaluate lessons plans and presentations and pupil interactions with the student teacher; (c) provide the opportunity for student teachers to create bridges between university-taught pedagogy and actual classroom practice; (d) model practices and procedures as an instructional strategy for assisting their novice practitioners; (e) develop student teacher's academic skills for specific grade-level standards and subjects; and (f) transfer control of the classroom to the student teachers who are preparing for their own teaching careers. Cooperating teachers expressed a range

of roles and responsibilities with consensus in several areas. These roles and responsibilities were not written in a handbook but rather came from the cooperating teachers perceptions of what was required and expected of them.

The first theme that emerged from the interviews - reflection, encouragement, and support - is founded in the theoretical basis of my study. Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory posits that learners solve problems through communication and work with more experienced members in a learning community. Vygotsky (1978) stated that social interactions allow people to develop advanced thoughts through conversations with more experienced practitioners. In a study conducted by Ottesen (2007), cooperating teachers helped student teachers verbalize experiences, give feedback, and understand how to improve performance. In Sadler's (2006) study, he mentioned many of the roles that the 10 cooperating teachers in my interviews expressed. Sadler listed specific and useful feedback, encouragement and praise, and relinquishing control of the classroom to the student teacher. Ethell and McMeniman (2002) reported that observations without linking practice to the thinking and intentions of the cooperating teacher leave student teachers to intuit cooperating teacher's practices. Reflection and access to the thinking behind practices provide connections between theory and pedagogy and their application. Danielson (2002) concurred that watching good teaching is not sufficient to knowing what makes good teaching. Cooperating teachers must make explicit connections for their student teachers to understand the continuity and connections between what was taught and what will be taught.

The cooperating teachers in my study expressed roles that were in alignment with past research studies. Cooperating teachers described their roles as including social

interactions with student teachers such as reflection and feedback as well as encouragement and praise. During the interviews, cooperating teachers addressed relinquishing control of classroom instruction to student teachers. Collins, Brown, and Newman (1989) cognitive apprenticeship theory that describes how learners solve problems through communication and work with more experienced members of the learning community is precisely the type of interactions described by the interview participants. The student teaching practicum is constructed to partner novice learners with experts in the way Collins et al.'s cognitive apprenticeship theory explains cognitive and metacognitive interactions.

Borko and Mayfield (2000) suggested that feedback within the student teacher-cooperating teacher dyad was often rushed and superficial. This rushed and cursory communication was not what was expressed by the cooperating teachers in my study. Many of the cooperating teachers did admit that when days were busy and student teachers were rushing off to classes that reflection and feedback was done at recess, while pupils were engaged in seatwork, or any stolen moments during the day. The cooperating teachers in my study described reflective time as a priority, but their student teachers might report a difference in that perception.

The second theme in the first question regarding observation and evaluation was discussed in Lemlich and Hertzog's (1999) study that found observations of student teachers by cooperating teachers led to questions and probes that caused reflection about instructional strategies. In turn, these evaluations improved instruction and curriculum delivery. Ethell and McMeniman (2002) argued that observation alone is not a sufficient means to learn to teach, but rather observation paired with reflections of expert thinkers

contributed to thinking and intentions behind classroom practices. The cooperating teachers in this study valued and recognized the impact of observation and evaluation partnered with feedback and encouragement.

Bridging theory to practice was the third theme to appear in response to this research question. Research studies (Anagnostopoulos, Smith, & Bamadjian, 2007; Smagorinsky et al., 2000; Stoughton, 2006) indicate there is often little connection between what the university teaches and the practical experiences student teachers have. Giebelhaus and Bowman (2002) discovered that university teacher-education programs place student teachers with little regard or knowledge of the cooperating teachers practices. This practice of placing teachers without prior information about cooperating teacher practices was true for the cooperating teachers I interviewed. Student teachers were assigned to their classrooms by personal request or random selection. Stoughton discovered that when student teachers learn one thing in university classes and are confronted with conflicting values in their practicum placements there was disequilibrium or disconnect for the student teacher. Cooperating teachers try to provide experiential opportunities for student teachers to practice what they learn, but in my study teachers were willing to regain control of the classroom if student teacher practices led lessons or behaviors awry.

Teachers who I interviewed also expressed concern about lessons that did not go exactly as planned at the theoretical level and the problems and questions that created for student teachers. As in Otteson's (2007) study, discussions between cooperating teachers and student teachers were directed primarily at deconstructing activities and rarely were theoretically informed. Often cooperating teachers were unaware of pedagogy and theory

being taught at the university and used reflection time to debrief on a specific activity or project. Bridging opportunities and trial-and-error experiences that cooperating teachers provide for student teachers help to focus practices on the realities of the classroom but are not always textbook exemplars or theoretically perfect.

The fourth theme, related to modeling practices, could be viewed as an acceptance or insistence on the status quo. Darling-Hammond (1999) warned that student teachers often revert to the norm of the established classroom rather than to try new approaches that integrate theory and research with practice. Overt and tacit messages are given when cooperating teachers model lessons (Sinclair, Munns, & Strong, 2005). One interpretation for the student teacher might be to maintain the current practices and just follow along with the cooperating teacher in areas of curriculum as well as management. I do not believe that is the case in my study as the cooperating teachers appeared interested in new theory, techniques, and ideas, but it may have appeared differently to student teachers had they been asked.

The fifth theme that appeared as a component of the cooperating teacher role was the development of academic skills. A focus on cooperating teachers working on academic skills with their student teachers did not come to light as a concern in the research literature but does reflect the practical side of teaching. When student teachers are assigned to a classroom for their practicum, the cooperating teacher is responsible to ensure that his or her student teacher is addressing and covering grade-level state standards in all of the curricular areas. University instruction might encompass how to create inclusive lesson plans on a given topic, but student teachers need to become content experts at their grade level when they enter the classroom as the new teacher. The

cooperating teacher turns over day-to-day instruction to the student teacher and when state standards are assessed in the Spring, pupils must be able to perform on those tests. It is necessary for student teachers to be familiar with state standards and curriculum content to ensure that all pupils receive appropriate and timely grade-level instruction. Pupil learning and understanding are the focus of classroom instruction. Universities cannot provide student teachers with lessons in every subject at every grade level so when they are assigned to be responsible for specific lessons student teachers must become content experts. The cooperating teachers have that content knowledge and provide a resource for assisting student teachers to acquire academic knowledge and skills.

The final theme that developed from the first research question was the transfer of control from the cooperating teacher to the student teacher. This process of classroom instructional takeover is part of the student teaching practicum and caused some issues with cooperating teachers in my study but did not appear as a specific problem in the literature. The issues expressed in my interviews were more driven by personal concerns of relinquishing control and handing over the students to anyone, and I do not believe it was related to the fact that these were student teachers. The teachers in this study were experienced and confident classroom teachers, and they had bonded with students at the time of the student teacher placement. Turning over classroom control and students' instruction was a personal struggle and not based on concerns about professional capacity, except in the one case of the student teacher who lacked the skills to be left in charge. In that case, the cooperating teacher had concerns grounded in observable limitations of the student teacher. The transfer of control can be difficult and challenging for cooperating teachers and the guidelines are left to personal interpretation. This is an

area that university supervisors might consider offering support and direction. Through observations and assessments of lesson preparation and presentation, university supervisors might use these observations and assessments to initiate conversations about student teacher readiness with the cooperating teachers. Including cooperating teachers in evaluation meetings with the student teacher throughout the practicum could provide indicators for cooperating teachers when and if student teachers are comfortable and ready to take over lessons or full classroom instruction.

Research question #2: “To what extent do cooperating teachers perceive they are prepared to address the needs of the student teaching practicum?” This question attempts to understand the preparation and training cooperating teachers possess that qualify them for the task of working with student teachers. Two main themes emerged from the interviews: (a) a lack of training and no specific prerequisites and (b) a reliance on prior experience. All of the cooperating teachers who were interviewed reported that they had not received training for their position, and to their knowledge there were no prerequisites for being a cooperating teacher other than tenure and a willingness to open the classroom to become a laboratory for practicing student teachers. Eight of the 10 interviewees were experienced classroom teachers as well as cooperating teachers and so over the years had developed their own skills in student teacher supervision and mentoring. I found that there are many roles that cooperating teachers perform, they are prepared for these roles primarily from their own classroom experience and an information packet provided by the university, have limited contact with supervisors from the university outside of student teacher observations, and transform their own practices through opening their classrooms to student teachers and current pedagogy.

The cooperating teachers in this study reported that they were involved in a plethora of jobs and roles but relied on their past experiences, successes, and failures to determine and establish expectations and goals for future interactions with student teachers. Cooperating teachers expressed a very loose connection with the university and believed they had to learn on their own. They had little, if any, orientation, or support from the university teacher education program. Familiarity with expectations came from prior work with student teachers.

The research reflects a lack of training for cooperating teachers that I found in my study. Suranna and Moss (2002) defined cooperating teachers as fine classroom practitioners but not trained in the role of adult learning or working with student teachers. Whitney et al. (2002) conducted research that found that cooperating teachers had the greatest impact on how student teachers would teach in their own classrooms but did this based on their own practical experience with little connection to theoretical knowledge. Ethell and McMeniman (2002) added to the understanding of explicit teaching and cognitive apprenticeship. They found that learning to teach solely through observation of cooperating teachers ignores the elements of teaching provided by thinking and collaborative reflection. Ethell and McMeniman identified that access to cooperating teachers' thinking about teaching is a key element missing in the practicum. Cooperating teachers are not trained to share their teaching practices through reflective practices. Training is a key component for cooperating teachers to learn how to provide understanding about best practices to their student teachers. Training of cooperating teachers is shown to be missing in the research, and it was missing in the classrooms of the cooperating teachers I interviewed as well.

Research question #3: “What do cooperating teachers perceive their needs are in respect to training and support?” The intent of this question was to investigate what training or assistance the university might provide that would enhance or support the cooperating teacher’s job of student teacher preparation. The answers to this question yielded five themes including (a) more university engagement with the cooperating teacher; (b) more classes, workshops, or seminars were needed to assist the training process; (c) a need to prescreen and select practicum partners rather than random selection as was perceived by responding cooperating teachers; (d) reimbursement in the form of monetary rewards, course reimbursement, or release days to meet student teachers and establish a relationship prior to the onset of the practicum; and (e) assistance from the university with pacing requirements, in terms of skill level not just a calendar of sequential lesson preparation or presentation events, for student teachers to take over classroom instruction. There was no consensus on this question, but there was a strong indication that cooperating teachers would benefit from more university contact. Most of the cooperating teachers acknowledged university supervisors interactions with the student teachers but also indicated that the university did not try to establish a supportive relationship with them. The deciding factor on whether or not the cooperating teachers perceived the university contact was adequate was based on student teacher performance.

Monetary rewards were mentioned as an enticing factor but not a priority and clearly not a deciding factor in accepting the position of cooperating teacher. Most of the cooperating teachers could not remember the dollar amounts, if any, that they received. None of the cooperating teachers in this study took any classes from the supervising university whether or not there was course reduction or reimbursement. Most of the

cooperating teachers were not certain if course money was offered or how it worked if it was offered. Tuition forgiveness was an area of reimbursement that was underutilized, and it was unclear what was available or what was covered, if anything.

Cooperating teachers also admitted that, although classes and training might be helpful and even advantageous, they were reluctant to commit to an extra work load that class time and engagement might create. Beck and Kosnik (2000) conducted research with cooperating teachers that found similar results to those reported by the participants in my study. Beck and Kosnick indicated that cooperating teachers would be willing to take classes but showed little interest in classes about being a better mentor. The cooperating teachers were interested in practical classes that had direct, immediate application. Teachers are busy, and time is at a premium; training must be pertinent and timely in order to make it appealing.

The university did provide a list of specifically calendared events throughout the semester leading toward the full take-over of classroom instruction, but there were no skill-level requirements outlined for determination of student teacher readiness for those events. University specifics were reported rarely and student teacher skill readiness was most often left up to the discretion of the cooperating teacher.

As cooperating teachers mentor and supervise student teachers, they need to know they are performing up to standards. Clark (2001) discovered that cooperating teachers desired feedback on their supervision and interactions with student teachers but seldom received any from university supervisors. Cooperating teachers in my study expressed the same need for university feedback from supervisors about their supervision and interactions but believed the focus of university supervising teachers was on the

observations and support of the student teacher. Cooperating teachers did not receive feedback on his or her development and growth as a classroom mentor because it was not important to the university. Flowers (2006) raised the question of sufficient training for cooperating teachers. Clarke and Jarvis-Selinger (2005) stated that universities needed to “provide clearer direction for designing professional development” that “enable and enhance the work of school-based educators” (p. 77). Although the research literature concurs with the findings in my study, there is little progress in designing or implementing cooperating teacher training.

Research question #4: “What training and support do cooperating teachers report they receive regarding their role as cooperating teacher?” This question was asked to target the training or support the universities offered to cooperating teachers. The answers elicited three themes including (a) a lack of university support, (b) a general information packet provided for cooperating teachers, and (c) conferences with university supervisors during the student teaching practicum. Because most of the inclusive conferences were held at the end of the semester, their observations and evaluations were summative in nature rather than formative. In that regard, most of the feedback that the cooperating teacher received came too late in the semester to provide areas of focus or improvement in their dealings with their student teachers.

The cooperating teachers in this study viewed the university supervisor primarily as a support person for the student teacher and secondarily as a support person for them. The cooperating teachers in this study reported that they performed a variety of tasks but relied on previous successes and failures to drive and establish parameters for future

interactions with student teachers rather than training or expert knowledge gleaned from university training, classes, or support.

The cooperating teachers reported a casual and surface relationship with university supervisors that did include an invitation to attend evaluation conferences if cooperating teachers were available during the scheduled conference time. The conference most often attended by all three members of the triad was the final evaluation meeting.

There was an information packet provided to the cooperating teachers and delivered to him or her by the student teacher. The information in the packet was shared between the classroom practicum partners and supervisors were contacted only if problems arose.

In a research study conducted by Moore (2000), the researcher found that universities routinely provided a handbook for cooperating teachers, and this handbook was the primary means of communicating cooperating teacher responsibilities. Moore also pointed out that there was no way to assure that cooperating teachers read or followed the handbook. The practice of providing a university handbook to the cooperating teachers is mirrored in my study as a university handbook was the manner in which expectations and guidelines were conveyed to the cooperating teachers I interviewed. The cooperating teachers in my study did not mention any conversations or discussions with the university about the handbook or university expectations. All of the reported conversations about guidelines took place between the student teacher and the cooperating teacher.

Several studies (Glenn, 2006; Sinclair et al., 2005; Sudzina et al., 1997) referred to the need for training cooperating teachers. “The cooperating teacher is the most

influential player in the cooperating teacher, student teacher, and university supervisor educator triangle, it behooves teacher educators to take seriously the particular and unique role of cooperating teachers as they contribute to student teachers' successes or failures" (Sudzina et al., 1997, p. 33). There is limited literature on cooperating teacher training, and my research substantiates that with further evidence that cooperating teachers are continuing to train student teachers without being trained themselves.

The Giebelhaus and Bowman study (2002) indicated that student teachers who collaborated with trained cooperating teacher demonstrated more complete and effective planning, more effective classroom instruction, and greater reflectivity on practice than those whose cooperating teachers only received orientation. My study participants did not receive orientation or training. Sadler (2006) suggested that unsuccessful cooperating teachers might benefit from training including how to provide feedback, how to negotiate classroom control, and the impact of encouragement. The participants in my study all indicated a successful practicum experience, but my study did not include the perspective of the student teacher regarding his or her view of a successful experience.

Research has acknowledged the pivotal role of the cooperating teacher and his or her impact on student teacher's success or failure, but little is done by universities to select, train, assign, or support cooperating teachers. According to the cooperating teachers I interviewed, neither of the supervising universities in the study provided cooperating teacher training although it is required by the state (CTC, 2007, p.10).

Research question #5: "To what extent does working with a student teacher transform the teaching practices of the cooperating teacher?" The cooperating teachers in this study were asked to share those reflective and transformative events that shaped

and reshaped their teaching practices. The responses were categorized into three themes: (a) collaboration and working together to form new teaching perceptions, approaches, methodologies, and theoretical knowledge; (b) relationships within the teaching partnership that lasted beyond the practicum and established future networks for professional growth; and (c) access to the newest, innovation teaching practices to keep classroom instruction current. Cooperating teachers received few, in any, monetary rewards but were excited about the prospect of innovative learning from their students. The cooperating teachers showed an appreciation for young, enthusiastic practitioners sharing their classrooms and their ideas. From interview accounts, transformative learning occurred for both student teachers and cooperating teachers through daily interactions and mutual sharing of skills and knowledge.

Glenn (2006) concluded from his limited study that effective mentors collaborate rather than dictate, relinquish an appropriate level of control, allow for personal relationships, share constructive feedback, and accept differences. Collaboration, along with the other findings, emerged as an important aspect of transformation of cooperating teachers in my study. Stanulis and Russell (2000) concluded that collaboration between student teachers and cooperating teachers was necessary to connect new ideas to existing ones. Mezirow's (1978) theory of transformation is based on connections made through collaborative enterprises.

Beck and Kosnik (2002) conducted a study and discovered that the heart and emotional side of interactions with cooperating teachers had great importance to student teachers because teaching is seen not just as what someone does but more defines who they are. They found that the emotional support and being partners in the practicum

emerged as a component of a good practicum. Cooperating teachers in this study indicated the value of building lifelong relationships with student teachers and the importance of collegial sharing over time beyond the semester of assigned student teaching. These interactions through reflective conversations and academic discussions led to the ongoing transformation of cooperating teachers.

Mezirow's (1991) transformative learning theory is the lens through which cooperating teacher and student teacher interactions were perceived and studied. Mezirow's theory explores how adults use the processes of critical thinking and rational discourse to make divergent decisions and construct meaning. Often transformations are triggered by traumatic events, but as in the case of cooperating teachers, life transitions can occur from an accumulation of transformations over time (Mezirow). Through collegial collaboration with new ideas introduced by student teacher's knowledge of current pedagogy, cooperating teacher practices can be transformed and reconstructed over time.

The cooperating teacher's role in establishing an environment that builds trust and care and facilitates the development of sensitive relationships among learners is a fundamental principle of fostering transformative learning (Taylor, 1998). The goal is to create a community of individuals who are "united in a shared experience of trying to make meaning of their life experience" (Loughlin, 1993, pp. 320-321). Cooperating teachers in this study all discussed the transformative power of the relationships that are built with student teachers who bring new theory and fresh, and sometimes controversial, ideas to the practicum experience.

In summary, cooperating teachers in this study were professionals who worked hard to enhance the opportunities for student teachers to ply their newly acquired skills and theoretical knowledge. Cooperating teachers often accepted the responsibility of hosting a student teacher without receiving outside training, remuneration, or recognition. They understood and were engaged in a complex web of interpersonal interactions with their student teachers and showed dedication to pupil performance and excellence in their classrooms. These cooperating teachers volunteered to host student teachers for the intrinsic reward of perpetuating their trade and passing along their skills and knowledge as well as enhancing and enriching their own professional capabilities.

Recommendations for Future Research

There is agreement in the research literature that student teaching is a capstone experience and that it has a great impact on the future practices of the student teacher. Currently the State of California requires universities to provide support and training for cooperating teachers (CTC, 2007, p.1), but in my study that was not happening at the two San Francisco Bay Area teacher-training programs from which I drew my samples. First, one needs to survey teacher education programs to learn which ones are implementing training for cooperating teachers. Further research then could include a larger sampling of these teacher education programs that are providing training or classes for cooperating teachers and use those results to examine effectiveness of classes on the outcomes of the student teaching practicum.

Future research might include cooperating teachers with less experience than I had in my study. The cooperating teachers who volunteered to be interviewed were more experienced in classroom instruction and were veteran cooperating teachers with a

substantial amount of student teacher mentoring experiences. Beginning cooperating teachers as well as cooperating teachers with less experience might shed a different light on the types of training needed to assist the transition from student to teacher.

Recommendations for future research include investigating the impact of having a universal and consistent cooperating teacher credentialing class or workshop. If a course or workshop is designed using an existing program similar to Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment (BTSA) with evaluation modules, introduction to adult learning theory, and mentoring and collaborative practices, but specific to student teaching assignments, then a study could be developed to investigate whether training effects the outcomes of the student teaching experience. This research could be pretest–posttest with a cooperating teacher being observed and evaluated prior to training, then receiving the training, and determining if specific behaviors changed and if so, how did they change. Research could look at several measurable attributes such as time, per day or week, spent in reflection, time the student teacher verbalizes ideas, versus how much time the cooperating teacher talks, numbers of teacher tips or strategies with pedagogical rationales, references to theory, research, or best practices during the practicum, and types of questions and feedback to critique lessons or presentations.

Recommendations for Practice

Currently California and the nation are facing economic problems that impact the future of public education. In California, schools are increasing class size and shortening the school year to try to comply with severely restricted budgets (Mehta, 2009). Some programs for beginning teachers, like BTSA, have been reduced and may be lost entirely (California Department of Education, 2009). Those experienced cooperating teachers,

like the ones in my study, will be retiring and taking their cooperating teaching experience with them as well as the BTSA training they received. The requirements for a high standard of educational excellence still exist, but fewer teachers will be employed to accomplish that task.

In light of economic problems, universities must work to provide highly qualified student teachers to replace a graying workforce. Cooperating teachers need to be trained to perform the important and varied roles demanded by student teachers. BTSA-like training should be implemented in universities, schools districts, or by the CTC as a requirement for the selection, qualifying, and training of cooperating teachers. In order to maximize learning opportunities for student teachers, teacher education programs should provide cooperating teachers with thorough training including collaborative programs with school districts. Cooperating teachers need to have skills in reflective listening, collaborative practices, adult learning theory, and observation and evaluation techniques.

The research supports the value and impact cooperating teachers have on student teachers. Therefore, it behooves universities and local school districts to work in conjunction with local teacher unions to select and train the best, brightest, most capable, and highly trained cooperating teachers to do this most important job. It should not be left up to chance that practicum experiences succeed or not. There should be a set of criteria that cooperating teachers must meet before student teachers are placed in their classrooms. Cooperating teachers show a wide variance in levels of commitment, desire, excitement and interest, and their training varies widely. Zeichner (2002) described a lack of preparation and support for the cooperating teachers as well as a lack of incentives or rewards.

University supervisors might have a set of values that they would like to have in the cooperating teachers with whom they have contact and student teachers probably have input into cooperating teacher characteristics. Researchers should investigate whether there is a set of cooperating teacher characteristics that are being used in other states that could provide a model. Perhaps a panel of university supervisors, student teachers, and experienced cooperating teachers could meet to establish a training protocol for cooperating teachers, or at least, make a list of measurable, teachable skills necessary to become a cooperating teacher. In consideration of working professionals, there needs to be classes with high impact on skills and useful tools but low impact on time and workload, certifications could be developed to be done in short blocks of time. If universities could work with local school districts and the teacher union to provide release time for potential cooperating teachers and have workshops or class credits apply to teacher's professional development credits without cost, teachers might be enticed to participate.

Universities should set up interviews for potential cooperating teacher "students" and develop criteria for selection. Practicing cooperating teachers should be asked to partner with university supervisors to develop a list of cooperating teacher attributes and skills and create an interview checklist. Universities should explore new and creative ways to develop partnerships with cooperating teachers and include them in classes as well as critical decision-making that involve the student teaching practicum. This proactive stance of the university would be quite a change from the distant supervisors viewed in my study. A training plan for cooperating teachers would involve a high level of engagement of university personnel to support, not only student teachers, but also

classroom teachers. This combination of training might have the benefit of bridging theory and pedagogy to practice, whereas cooperating teachers would have a direct connection to the university and current theory without the student teacher being the only conduit.

Conclusions

This qualitative study contributed to the understanding of the perceptions of elementary-school cooperating teachers in the San Francisco Bay Area who facilitated student teachers during their practicum. Recognizing the impact cooperating teachers have on student teachers dictates that universities provide training and support to ensure the highest quality practicum experiences for our newest teachers.

This study and its results are important because the study findings honor the dedicated work cooperating teachers accomplish assisting student teachers in their classrooms with minimal, if any, compensation or training and support from the supervising university. This study's results also suggest that consistency in training and selection might provide standard performance expectations and classroom supervision for student teachers and elevate cooperating teacher status to a more professional and trained subgroup of classroom professionals. Giebelhaus and Bowman (2002) found that student teachers were often working with enthusiastic cooperating teachers who are ill prepared for their supervisory role. Student teaching is a pivotal time in the teacher training process and should be given high priority and consideration when selecting, training, and supporting those individuals who are most instrumental in the transitions from student teacher to teacher: cooperating teachers.

Afterward

This research study was an insightful and eye-opening experience. The tough state and federal economic times have created challenges in the educational arena. Local, state, and federal budgets are making severe cuts into educational programs that effect class size, instructional support, and the BTSA programs. California's Superintendent of Public Instruction, Jack O'Connell, pointed to the number of teachers and staff who had received pink slips as of Monday morning, March 15, 1010, which is nearly 22,000. By late afternoon that same day, it had topped 23,000. California teachers were given pink slips, indicating they may not be needed when classes begin in the Fall. After receiving these notices, they still had to go back to their classrooms to teach that day and through the end of the year. The demands on teachers (increased class size, more challenging state standards, and lower district budgets to provide materials and support) and teacher quality expectations (Teaching Performance Expectations (TPE), Teaching Performance Assessments (TPA), California Standards for the Teaching Profession (CSTP), and No Child Left Behind (NCLB) requirements for highly qualified teachers) have increased at the same time as the support systems and budgets are being cut. Yet, elementary-school teachers continue to be dedicated and hard-working professionals.

All of the study participants were gracious with their time and their ideas. They all understood the importance of teachers helping teachers and passing on the ideas that have made them successful. The interview participants were eager to share ideas with me and contribute to my research in much the same way they open their classrooms to student teachers. Many of the participants spoke to the intrinsic value of education and

passing it on. The teachers I interviewed are not in education for the money but rather the value they place on education.

The research process was, at times, challenging. The state university student teacher coordinator provided me with a spreadsheet of names that included all student teachers' names, their cooperating teacher's names, and the names of the school sites where the practicum took place. It was necessary to access each school site online to discover websites and email addresses. Often the teacher's names were misspelled or there was other incorrect information, but eventually messages were sent and teachers who did reply did so immediately or within the first 3 days. The first five teachers I contacted, for the second time for interviews, all agreed to meet. Dates and times were scheduled, and interviews were completed in a timely manner.

The private university presented a different set of challenges. The student teacher coordinator would not release cooperating teacher's names or contact information citing their privacy rights. I was able to obtain names through a personal contact with two of the university's supervisors. It was through this circuitous route that I made contact with a second set of cooperating teachers and set up and conducted interviews. One of my cooperating teachers contacts was reluctant to be interviewed because her experience with the university and her student teacher had not been satisfactory. She did agree for me to come and her ideas, concerns, and suggestions gave a different perspective on the practicum experience and university support and involvement.

After completing my own teaching day, I drove to 10 different school sites and met 10 cooperating teachers in a variety of settings. They were gracious and eager to tell

their stories. The site principals were supportive of my research, and all of them agreed to allow cooperating teachers to give interviews in their classrooms.

Through the one-on-one interview process, I was able to meet and connect with teachers from a wide range of elementary schools in my local area. One teacher I interviewed had been called into a meeting before the start of school on the day that I met with her to have the entire staff be told they would have to find other jobs at schools within the district. This school has been in school improvement so the state had required it to restructure. The teachers were given this news then told to go back to their classrooms and continue to give quality instruction to deserving pupils. The teacher I interviewed was planning on retiring next year but, under the circumstances, was being forced to consider thinking about leaving a year earlier.

We face tough challenges in education, and it is important to provide new teachers with the most effective tools for teaching children. Using experienced teachers to share and model practice is not a new idea, but giving cooperating teachers training and support in adult learning theory, observation techniques, and collaborative partnerships are often recommended but seldom studied or tried practice.

It is my hope that the results of my study may lead to the development of a certification program for cooperating teachers with consistent training and support from supervising universities along with specific guidelines for selection and assignment procedures for cooperating teachers. The practicum is the capstone event in the student teaching program and the cooperating teachers who host these practicing teachers must be trained and ready to meet new challenges as they arise.

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APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A

Letters Requesting Names of Cooperating Teachers

XXXXXXX XXXXXX, Ph.D.
 Chair of Education
 XXXXXXXX
 XXXXXXXX, XX. XXXXX

Dear Dr. XXXXXXXX:

This letter confirms that you have been provided with a description of my dissertation research concerning the needs and training of Cooperating Teachers in their role as mentors and supervisors of student teachers.. Your signature below indicates that you agree to identify a pool of cooperating teachers who I may contact for participation in this study. Cooperating Teachers will receive a cover letter, Informed Consent Form, demographic/screening survey, and pre-addressed, stamped, return envelope. Cooperating Teachers who agree to participate will complete the survey and may be selected to participate in an individual interview scheduled at a time and place convenient to the Cooperating Teacher.

I will make every effort to ensure that my data collection causes minimal inconveniences to the Cooperating Teachers. Cooperating Teacher's participation will be entirely voluntary and results will be kept confidential and anonymous.

After my research project has been completed in December 2009, I will provide you a summary of my research findings and conclusions. Please feel free to contact me if you have any further questions about this project.

Sincerely,

XXXX XXXXXXXX
 Doctoral Candidate
 XXXXXXXXXXXXX
 XXXXXXXXXXXXX
 xxx-xxx-xxxx home
 xxx-xxx-xxxx cell
 email address

Signature _____

Dr. XXXXXXXX XXXXXXXX

Date _____

XXXXXX XXXXXX, Ed D
 Associate Dean
 School of Education
 XXXXXXXXX
 XXXX XXXXXX St.
 XXXXXXXXXXXX, CA XXXXX

Dear Dr. XXXXXX:

This letter confirms that you have been provided with a description of my dissertation research concerning the needs and training of Cooperating Teachers in their role as mentors and supervisors of student teachers.. Your signature below indicates that you agree to identify a pool of cooperating teachers who I may contact for participation in this study. Cooperating Teachers will receive a cover letter, Informed Consent Form, demographic/screening survey, and pre-addressed, stamped, return envelope. Cooperating Teachers who agree to participate will complete the survey and may be selected to participate in an individual interview scheduled at a time and place convenient to the Cooperating Teacher.

I will make every effort to ensure that my data collection causes minimal inconveniences to the Cooperating Teachers. Cooperating Teacher's participation will be entirely voluntary and results will be kept confidential and anonymous.

After my research project has been completed in December 2009, I will provide you a summary of my research findings and conclusions. Please feel free to contact me if you have any further questions about this project.

Sincerely,

XXXXX XXXXXXXXX
 Doctoral Candidate
 XXXX XXXXXXXXX
 XXXXXXXX, CA XXXXX
 XXX-XXX-XXXX home
 XXX-XXX-XXXX cell
 email; address

Signature _____
 Dr. XXXXXX XXXXXXXXX

Date _____

APPENDIX B

Invitation to Participate for Cooperating Teachers

Date

Dear ,

You are invited to participate in a research project that I will conduct this year. The research will be used for the purposes of writing a doctoral dissertation at the XXXXXXXX XXXXXXXX School of Education. The research results might be used in conference presentations or published professional journal articles.

Through this project, I am interested in investigating the needs and training of cooperating teachers as mentors and supervisors of student teachers. Student teaching is the gateway experience whereby student teachers bridge educational theory and practical classroom application. I would like to investigate how cooperating teachers are trained and supported by universities and colleges during this practicum period.

You have already completed a short questionnaire that provided background information. In addition, I am requesting your help and permission to interview you for about one hour about your cooperating teaching experiences, practices, and training. The interviews will be conducted at your school site or a designated place of your convenience. I have attached a copy of the interview questions so you have time to prepare and consider your responses. I will record the interview. I guarantee that providing a pseudonym will protect your identity. After the interview is transcribed, it will be stored in an electric file that will be password protected and accessible only by the researcher. You will receive a transcription of your interview to check the veracity and clarity of your statements. You will have an opportunity to change or add to your answers in writing or by phone within a week of receiving the transcript. You may withdraw from the project at any time, should that prove necessary.

If you choose to participate, please respond by email, mail, or phone as soon as possible to set up an interview appointment. There will be an Informed Consent Form that you can sign at the time of the interview. I will provide copies of the Informed Consent Form for you to complete or you can print and complete the attached forms (Consent letter and interview questions) prior to the interview and bring them with you.

My contact information is: XXXXX XXXXXXXX
 XXXXXXX
 XXXXXXXXXX, CA XXXXX
 XXX-XXX-XXXX home
 XXX-XXX-XXXX cell
 email address

Sincerely,

XXXXX XXXXXXXXX

APPENDIX C

Informed Consent Form for Cooperating Teachers

CONSENT TO BE A RESEARCH SUBJECT

Purpose and Background

Ms. Xxxx Xxxxxx, a graduate student at the School of Education at the xxxxxxxxxx xxxxxx xxxxxxxxxx, is conducting a study of cooperating teachers and their training as supervisors of student teachers. Cooperating teaching experiences, practices, and training are key components of the practicum experience for university student teachers, the researcher is interested in exploring these experiences and needs of cooperating teachers.

I am being asked to participate in this study because I am an elementary-school classroom teacher and currently am supervising a student teacher or I have had a student teacher in my classroom within the past 12 months.

Procedures

Should I agree to be a participant in this study, the following shall occur:

1. I will complete a short questionnaire giving basic information about me, including age, gender, and information about my educational background.
2. If selected I will agree to meet with the researcher for an audio recorded one-hour interview to discuss my views about my cooperating teaching experiences, practices, and needs. The location and the time of the interview will be arranged at my convenience.
3. I will agree to review the analysis of my interview for accuracy of interpretation of my information.

Risks and/or Discomforts

The risks associated with participation in this study are minimal. In the event that any questions asked during the interview make me uncomfortable, I may decline to answer them. I may also withdraw my participation in this study at any time.

I understand the researcher will maintain confidentiality; however, I realize that loss of confidentiality is a possibility. No individual identities will be used in reports or publications that may result from this study. The researcher will keep all information in locked file cabinets or password protected computer files. Only the researcher will have access to these files.

Benefits

An anticipated benefit of this study is a better understanding of cooperating teachers' preparation and role in the student teaching practicum. Should I participate in the one-hour interview session, I will receive a \$25.00 gift card, which is another potential benefit of my participation in this study.

Costs/Financial Considerations

There will be no financial costs to me as a result of taking part in this study.

Payment/Reimbursement

I will receive a \$25.00 gift card for participating in the interview portion of this study. There will be no reimbursement or payment for completion of the questionnaire.

Questions

I have talked with Ms. Joy Hamilton about this study and have had my questions answered. If I have further questions about the study, I may call her at xxx-xxx-xxxx.

If I have any questions or comments about participation in this study, I should first talk with Ms. XXXXXXXX. If for some reason I do not wish to do this, I may contact the IRBPHS, which is concerned with protection of volunteers in research projects. I may reach the IRBPHS office by calling xxx-xxx-xxxx and leaving a voicemail message, by e-mailing IRBPHS@xxxxx.edu, or by writing to the IRBPHS, Department of Counseling Psychology, School of Education, xxxxxxxx xxxxxx xxxxxxx, xxxx xxxxxx xxxxxxxxx, CA xxxxxx.

Consent

I have been given a copy of the "Research Subject's Bill of Rights," and I have been given a copy of this consent form to keep.

Participation in research is voluntary. I am free to decline to be in this study, or to withdraw from it at any point.

My signature below indicates that I agree to participate in this study.

Participant's Signature

Date of Signature

Signature of Person Obtaining Consent

Date of Signature

APPENDIX D

Demographic Information and Questions for Cooperating Teachers

Questions for Cooperating Teachers

My name is Xxxx Xxxxxx and I am conducting research to examine the role of the cooperating teacher as a mentor, supervisor, reflective listener, and support provider for student teachers and to examine the training and preparation cooperating teachers receive for those roles. I am also interested in what cooperating teachers perceive their needs are to enable them perform their role.

Dr. Xxxxxx provided names of cooperating teachers for California Xxxxxx Xxxxxx last semester and yours was included. I am hopeful that you will complete and return the following 10-minute questionnaire. I will be using these data to select cooperating teachers to participant in an hour-long personal interview. Your information will remain confidential and your privacy protected. You will be contacted by email, mail, or telephone if you are selected for the interview and additional information will be sent by mail or email.

If you have any questions or comments about participation in this study, you should first talk with Ms. Xxxxxxxx. If for some reason you do not wish to do this, you may contact the IRBPHS, which is concerned with protection of volunteers in research projects. I may reach the IRBPHS office by calling xxx-xxx-xxxx and leaving a voicemail message, by e-mailing IRBPHS@xxxxx.edu, or by writing to the IRBPHS, Department of Counseling Psychology, School of Education, Xxxxxxxx Xxxxxx Xxxxxx xxxxxxxxxxxx, xxxx Xxxxxxx St. Xxxxx Xxxxxx, CA xxxxx.

Thank you.

Please fill in your contact information below.

Name: _____ Date: _____

Home Address: _____

Home phone: _____ Cell: _____ email: _____

Grade level you teach: _____

School at which you currently teach: _____ Population: _____

School District and location (city): _____

Please complete the following background information.

1. Age: _____

2. Gender M F

3. What other degrees or credentials do you hold? _____

4. What was your college major: _____

5. Is teaching your first career? Yes No

6. How many years have you taught? 3-5 6-10 11-20 more than 20

7. Did you complete student teaching in your program? Yes No

8. Please think of 5-6 words that describe your own teacher preparation. _____

9. How many student teachers have you hosted? 1 2-3 4 or more

10. Please list the universities or colleges the student teachers were from?

Questions for Cooperating Teachers

My name is Xxxxx Xxxxxxx and I am conducting research to examine the role of the cooperating teacher as a mentor, supervisor, reflective listener, and support provider for student teachers and to examine the training and preparation cooperating teachers receive for those roles. I am also interested in what cooperating teachers perceive their needs are to enable them perform their role.

Dr. Xxxxxxx provided names of cooperating teachers for the Xxxxxxxx Xxx Xxxxx Xxxxx last semester and yours was included. I am hopeful that you will complete and return the following 10-minute questionnaire. I will be using these data to select cooperating teachers to participant in an hour-long personal interview. Your information will remain confidential and your privacy protected. You will be contacted by email, mail, or telephone if you are selected for the interview and additional information will be sent by mail or email.

If you have any questions or comments about participation in this study, you should first talk with Ms. Xxxxxxx. If for some reason you do not wish to do this, you may contact the IRBPHS, which is concerned with protection of volunteers in research projects. I may reach the IRBPHS office by calling xxx-xxx-xxxx and leaving a voicemail message, by e-mailing IRBPHS@xxxx.edu, or by writing to the IRBPHS, Department of Counseling Psychology, School of Education, University of xxxxxx xxxxxx, xxxxx xxxxxxxx St. Xxxxxx Xxxxxxx, CA xxxxx.

Thank you.

Please fill in your contact information below.

Name: _____ Date: _____

Home Address: _____

Home phone: _____ Cell: _____ email: _____

Grade level you teach: _____

School at which you currently teach: _____ Population: _____

School District and location (city): _____

Please complete the following background information.

1. Age: _____
2. Gender M F
3. What other degrees or credentials do you hold? _____
4. What was your college major: _____
5. Is teaching your first career? Yes No
6. How many years have you taught? 3-5 6-10 11-20 more than 20
7. Did you complete student teaching in your program? Yes No
8. Please think of 5-6 words that describe your own teacher preparation. _____

9. How many student teachers have you hosted? 1 2-3 4 or more
10. Please list the universities or colleges the student teachers were from?

APPENDIX E

Interview Protocol for Cooperating Teachers

Interview Protocol

Study Title

Cooperating Teachers – An Investigation into Their Needs and Training as Mentors and Supervisors of Student Teachers

Time of Interview:

Date:

Place:

Interviewee:

Description of the Study (Review each of the following topics with the interviewee.)

a.) Study Purpose: The purpose of this study is to examine the training and preparation of cooperating teachers for their roles as mentor, supervisor, facilitator, reflective listener, and their perceived needs regarding that training.

b.) Data Collection: During this interview, I will ask you questions about your preparation and training for your role as a cooperating teacher. Please answer as specifically and fully as you can. I will be using 2 recording devices to assure the accuracy of my reported findings and to be sure to protect against any unavoidable mechanical failures.

c.) Protection of Data Confidentiality – You will be assigned a pseudonym and transcribed interviews will be kept in secure files with access codes known only to me.

d.) Data Accuracy: After I have transcribed the interview, I will send you a transcript to review and verify the accuracy of your responses.

e.) Interview Length: Approximate length will be one hour.

Sign the consent form.

“I have your permission to record the interview so I will now turn on the recorders.”

Turn on the recorders and begin the interview.

Questions:

Please tell me about your experiences as a cooperating teacher:

1. How were you selected to be a cooperating teacher?
2. Why did you decide to have a student teacher?
3. How were you introduced to your student teacher?
4. What information was provided to you, written or oral, to inform you what the university expected or student teacher required of you before, during, or after the practicum?
5. What responsibilities did you have for evaluation or grading of your student teacher?
6. How did you and your student teacher set aside time for feedback and reflection?
7. What contact did you have with university personnel during the student teaching practicum?
8. What compensation did the university provide for your work as a cooperating teacher?
9. What opportunities might be valuable for you to have in order to be better prepared as a cooperating teacher?
10. In what ways did your experience transform your own teaching practices?
11. Is there anything about your experience that you would change or things you might do differently?
12. Is there anything else?

Appendix F

Principal's Letter of Consent

Dear (principal's name),

My name is Xxxxx Xxxxxx and I am currently a doctoral candidate in the School of Education at Xxxxxx Xxxxxxx. As part of the degree requirements, I am doing a study on the needs and training of cooperating teachers. (Teacher's name) has expressed an interest in participating in my study.

Through this project, I am interested in exploring how cooperating teachers are selected and trained to assist university preservice student teachers. The practicum experience is a requirement for completion of the university elementary credential program. The cooperating teacher is an essential partner in the practicum experience and I would like to investigate what cooperating teachers perceive about their training and support needs.

Participation in this study is entirely voluntary and results will be kept confidential and anonymous. Your signature on the enclosed consent letter indicates that you acknowledge and authorize the research that is to be conducted with the permission of the cooperating teacher on school grounds. Please sign the letter and return it in the pre-addressed, stamped envelope.

Sincerely,

Xxxxx Xxxxxx
 Doctoral Candidate
 School of Education
 Xxxxx Xxxxxxx
 Email address
 (xxx) xxx-xxxx

Consent

My signature below indicates that I acknowledge and authorize Xxxxx Xxxxxx to interview (teacher's name) about their cooperating teacher needs and training. I give permission for this interview to be conducted on school grounds. Please sign this letter and return it in the pre-addressed, stamped, envelope.

Signature:

Date:

APPENDIX G

Interview Transcripts

January 7, 2010

Ann, third grade teacher

Signed consent form and agreed to be recorded

1. How were you selected to be a cooperating teacher?

Probably through the principal ... I was asked if I would be interested in having a student teacher, but I also think the college maybe has a list of names of teachers who participate and so they kind of ask people who have done it before. I am assuming you got my name off of a list of participating teachers. They keep track of that and then the principal asked me if I was interested or not, so that's how I ended up choosing to take a student teacher. In the end, I volunteered for it.

2. Why did you decide to have a student teacher?

Generally speaking I've had pretty good experiences having student teachers. There's been only a couple of occurrences when it wasn't a good thing and I had to, one person I had to actually had to screen out and then they petitioned and ended up getting a credential anyways. Basically, on the whole, my experiences with student teachers has [sic] been positive and what I like about having a student teacher in the classroom is that they bring ... first of all, it's another set of eyes, set of ears, another body in the room to help with students that are having difficulty or whatever. The ability to break the groups down into smaller groups plus that, I just enjoy having their excitement and enthusiasm in the classroom because they bring the youth into it. I've been teaching 30 years now so it becomes a little bit old hat, but when a new student teacher comes in its that's excitement and that whole, gosh, they're all fired up and they're asking to try this and try that and they bring a lot of new, different kind of lessons that I enjoy watching. So it is a kind of give and take. They learn from me, different procedures on the management of the classroom, and I learn from them too.

3. How were you introduced to your student teacher?

I was introduced in different ways. I have it happen where they just show up and there they are and you meet them in the teacher's lounge or whatever. I personally like to get the name as soon as possible and get the phone number and email address because what I like to do and what I'm doing right now is I have the students write a letter to the new student teacher. Its good experience for them and it gives good insights to the student teacher about what they're dealing and who they're dealing with. So, for example, the one I'm going to get in a week or so, she called me. I had gotten her name, I didn't have a phone number or anything and she called and let a message in the office and left an email message also. So, I contacted her and she's made arrangements to come in, and meet me, and that kind of thing. We are setting up the introductions together and I'm pretty comfortable.

4. What information was provided to you, written or oral, to inform you what the university expected or student teacher required of you before, during, or after the

practicum?

They, the university, will provide me with a packet and it's a packet stating what is required of the student teacher as far as assignments and what they have to do. Primarily [state university] is about the only university we have had most recently, sometimes from other locations there is very little information. It all depends on where the student comes from, but from [city name] you do receive a packet that's got all of the information in it. It's kind of standard. Usually they observe and then after a period of time they cover a subject and you kind of season them into, but it depends on what part of the year they are in too and how much they do.

5. What your responsibilities did you have for the evaluation or grading of your student teacher?

Actually, I participate when they are observed by their supervisor. I participate in that session and I have input there, but really there is very little written evaluation or anything like that. I know that when I've had problems with student teachers I talk with the supervisor and let them know that things weren't working and in one case the supervisor and I made the decision to not pass him on. So the communication between the supervisor and the teacher is important but there is not a written evaluation or anything like that. The grade is, primarily, given by the supervisor with my input and observation. And quite honestly, I've had some supervisors that are really tough and are really on the student teacher and giving them some huge input and then I've seen some supervisors that give an "oh that was great and that was fine, blah" and that was it. So there was a huge range there too.

6. How did you and your student teacher set aside time for feedback and reflection?

First of all I usually try to encourage the student teacher to eat lunch in the staff room in which they need to learn to do that anyway to be part of the team and what not. Usually during lunchtime we'll discuss things that worked or didn't work. Usually during prep time we'll use some of the prep time to critique some of the lessons and go over it. I always ask them, what do you think went really well and where do you think there were any problems ... what do you think you could have changed? I make a suggestion here or a suggestion there, but pretty much it's pretty informal because I don't want them to feel like they're under the microscope. I want them to feel confident in different situations. From my past experiences, my own self, when I did my student teaching, I was treated as a peon - and told not to use a red pen and only a red pencil and of course I had to buy a phonograph because I had to review the records that I would be using in the class. So there's no way that I would treat or belittle someone the way I was treated as an underling like that or a little gopher and that kind of thing. They are treated as equals. They're professional. That's why I try to make it a very comfortable, give-and-take situation.

Researcher: What is your prep situation at this site to allow for feedback and reflection? We have an hour period of music and we have an hour period of PE (physical education) and a period of media center and one common prep hour also - so it's four prep periods

we have built into the week to debrief.

7. What contact did you have with university personnel during your work as a cooperating teacher?

The only person that I might have any contact with is maybe the supervisor and that's about it and nobody else ... except the student teacher, of course, and they are not personnel so it is primarily the supervisor. There is usually a conference after the supervisor has observed the student teacher do a lesson and then the three of us get together. I am invited to that, if I can make it. If it's right after the lesson and there's a lesson to be taught and the kids are still in the room then I can't participate, but then there's time when I do. So, it just depends.

8. What compensation did the university provide for your work as a cooperating teacher?

There might be some kind of reduced tuition offered, but I just haven't pursued that. Last time I had a student teacher there was research the university was doing and if I participated I would get \$100 or something like that so I thought okay. It was like observing my student teacher do a lesson so it was not a big deal, but it never came to fruit. So, it was kind of like, oh, well!

9. What opportunities might be valuable for you to have in order to be better prepared as a cooperating teacher?

My preparation is definitely based on my experiences and what I feel like the progression that they [student teacher] need to go through to be successful for placement. There's a ... when do they start taking over? In fact, she needs to do a week's take over, and you need to anticipate all this, if they're going to have a two week take over and then there's going to be a week off in the spring that's going to eliminate some time there and you have to kind of chart things out and plan things out and I kind of know that from experience. But, another teacher here is going to be having a student teacher right now also ... she's never had a student teacher before so she 's saying, "Oh good, I can have them do my yard duty and I can have them do this and I can have her do that and I'm going to do all these questionnaires and ..." because she's never had a student teacher before she doesn't really understand that student teachers also have things they have to get done for the university and other things. So she is not comprehending the pacing and the expectations yet. That will come when she gets the packet and she talks to the student teacher and it will be sort of hit or miss. I'll also conference with her and help her too. Considering how many student teachers I've had, I'd say it is primarily from experience from me and as for me being better prepared ... I can't think of anything specific.

Researcher: Has the university offered you anything to help prepare you, or for this new teacher, for the practicum?

Training for the cooperating teacher ... ? No. It's, here's your student teacher and here's her part.

Researcher: If you, or this new cooperating teacher, were having a problem where would you or she go?

By the fact that she knows I'm getting a student teacher and she knows I'm getting a student teacher I have already kind of talked to her about what is kosher and what is not ... what you can do and what you shouldn't do. I've already talked to her a little bit about it and she can come to me, but that's just between us. I would expect that she should be able to get information and advice from the supervisor and also I think it's up to her to talk with the student teacher regarding the expectations ... what do we have to do here . I'm thinking that we might even sit down with a four way group and kind of discuss it too. But, the thing is the placement of my student teacher is different than her student teacher because her student teacher is placed until May and mine is only through March. So, her student teacher will probably be observing a little bit longer and then slowly kind of work into it, where as mine is going to be observing very briefly and then getting it because she's going to have to do a week take over. The pacing is going to be different for mine than it is going to be for hers because they are from different programs so there is difference in the student teaching length.

10. In what ways did your experience transform your own teaching practices?

They [student teachers] bring new blood into the classroom, and energy, and it's always good to have a partner to work with so you team off of each other. She'll get an idea or he'll get an idea and I'll get an idea and you'll feed off of each other - this is even with an experienced teacher, with any body in the classroom. Two heads are better than one, so you play off of each other. You can make lessons a lot richer and because there's two bodies in the room it make it with more eyes and ears around to work with kids.

11. Is there anything in your experience that you would change or things you would do differently?

Well, one thing is that this shorter placement doesn't behoove this student teacher. I think they need a longer placement than that because they need to get to know the kids and get the feel of the classroom. So, I think longer placements are better number one. Last year the student placement that I had, had a lot of work that they had to do for the university versus the classroom. They had what were called TPAs and they were these big papers that these student teachers had to write up so their focus in the classroom was taken away because then they needed to concentrate on getting this paperwork and these assignments done so, in other words, the student teacher wasn't really able to completely focus on the student teaching experience because they were required, in order to pass the program, to do these TPAs. So I think more experience in the classroom and I think taking over the responsibility - I think the sooner they take on the responsibility, the sooner they have that have that individualized - without me in the classroom kind of controlling thing - they either make it or break it thing. Either get a handle on classroom management or you're not. The sooner they learn that the better. Preferably in the first placement ... if they can't cut it, then they shouldn't be in there.

The other thing too is that for every lesson last year that the student taught for me, and there were a lot when she took over the whole thing, she was supposed to, according to the university, write out a detailed lesson plan for each one of those lessons. Well, realistically, do I? No! I mean realistically you don't. You have to add that on to the TPAs and all of the other work the student teachers had to do. I understand the perspective of the university, in the sense that they have to have some documentation. Yes, they are going through this. But, on the other hand, if this person becomes a capable student teacher, or a teacher, then they need to have a duty to prepare in the classroom, that is the most valuable thing.

12. Is there anything else?

Some of the supervisors have been out of the classroom for a long time and they are going by theory rather than reality in the classroom and they are looking for a lot of the theory things rather than what is happening in the classroom. I think it would be beneficial if a lot of supervisors still had a handle on what is really happening in the classroom. Many of them seem like they are fairly distant from the classroom. They have some pie in the sky ideals rather than what is really going on.

That, like I said, I've had some supervisors that came on a routine basis and they were very reliable and it happened well and I've had other supervisors that barely showed up and wrote up a two sentence evaluation, if that. Personally, I don't feel that was beneficial to the teacher. They need to give a detailed evaluation; what worked well and if it was a good lesson, well, thanks for telling me that, but what was it that worked - that kind of thing. The other thing, too, that the university, any university, that is doing the teaching program, I think there needs to be a class ... this may sound silly, but I think there needs to be a class on how to use a teacher's manual. The math manuals, the reading manuals, are pretty paced out by daily kind of instruction, but there is all the added stuff around it. What's important and what's not important - looking at that and how to figure out how to use the book and I think it wouldn't be too difficult and I think that they could create a class that is just about manuals. Then when a student teacher walks into a classroom and they grab a manual and they look at that - it just bowls them over just looking at it - at the manual the first time and you're just ... "gasp...". And, you're expected to do a lesson and these poor little student teachers, some of them, their eyes are just fallin' out of their heads. So, some sort of instruction at the university level of how to use a teacher's manual [would be helpful].

Some of them (student teachers) have had experience working with children prior to getting into the student teacher program and that is valuable because they know what to expect and what not to expect. But, I've had other student teachers without any experience with children and they walk in and they're completely out of touch with what to do with a child because they haven't been around them. That's another thing, is when the university evaluates people that get into the program I think it is important that student teachers have experience with children. I had one student teacher that had no experience - I asked, so what experience have you had and he said, "Oh, I play with my son's friends. Okay, so have you worked with groups of children and what not ...? And

then the other student teacher I had last year, she had absolutely no experience working with children and she had ... usually if you've had some experience with children, your management style and you have a little bit of management going on with how you manage the classroom. And that's another thing the university could get into more is classroom management styles and I think that a class on that ... I know they use theorem but I don't know if they actually give the student teachers lessons to do in the classroom about management of different strategies. I don't know if they do that or not - to my knowledge, I haven't had them. They, the student teachers, pick up on my management style and they feed into that and just use that and it turns out to be the easiest thing because that's what the kids are used to.

Researcher: About university requirements of TPAs - these are new requirements so what is your understanding of the TPAs and are you involved with TPAs in any way?

I am not involved at all in the TPAs. It is an assignment from the university to the student teacher and it is their responsibility to write up this theorem thing or whatever ... it is 9, 10, it is big and intense. I have had to work with other student teachers and when they were having to do those last year. It was extremely distracting because it took their focus and concentration away from their student teaching experience because they had a deadline and they had to finish this TPA. And, so in their heads they're doing this panic attack thing of - I've got to get my TPA done and then, but I've got to do these lessons. They were torn. The long term purpose of the TPA from the university standpoint is to address certain requirements, but for the student teacher, I was told by a student teacher these (TPAs) are a complete waste of time and I'll never use these again and it's in my circular file or whatever. The TPA and classroom work are separate entities and it's a university assignment and this is the classroom and what's going on in the classroom and they're not doing this - they are not gelling together - meshing. It's like if you're doing this lesson here, is it tying into what is happening in the university with the TPAs. I didn't see that tie in. I saw it - I have to get this assignment done for the university and for my whatever "prof" and write up these detailed lessons plans for the supervisor in here [classroom]. It wasn't meshed. The TPA thing is a fairly new thing and it is accountability issue that they are dealing with at the university level and that's how they're addressing it. I don't see it as beneficial; I see it as detrimental. It is taking the focus of the student teacher out of the classroom and they really need to be focusing there because they're nervous about being in a classroom - it's a whole new experience. They end up being split and it creates frustration. I saw huge frustration, and not just with the student teacher I had but with all of them. We had several of them here and they were all kind of panicking, they were going through this panic.

Researcher: do you need to understand the TPAs?

It really doesn't matter if I understand it or not, it's just a required assignment from the university to the student teacher. Student teachers have a responsibility in the classroom and I don't see it - I don't know how it's directly related to the classroom. I think it's just, for an example, one of the TPAs they had to do was on classroom management and so she may have use some of my concepts and my styles written in a paper, what she observed, and maybe she got some theories about classroom management, but was that applied in the classroom? Was she supposed to do a lesson on that and turn it in ... ? I

didn't see that relate to the classroom. I think it was from whatever research she did - I just tell them and model things - like, I have a point system, a goodie box, and I have different things that have worked with me over the years - I would show them that, but I don't have any specific documents or teacher lesson kinds of things that I give them, I may have them, but God knows where they're at!!!

I have the majority of my student teachers have been from [city name]. I have had student teachers on again off again. I didn't have student teachers for a while when I was working in the media center and a few year that I just didn't get asked if I wanted one or not. As a teacher you don't necessarily go out and pursue it but you tell your principal if a student teacher comes around I wouldn't mind it or the principal comes up and asks you, but otherwise, generally speaking, if it happens it happens if it doesn't it doesn't. The principal is the one who initiates it or the university pursues, or asks them, do you want to place student teachers at your school. The nice thing about this school is that it is pretty racially integrated. We've got a lot of different ethnicities in our school. That's an advantage because I know that universities tend to want to put the students in a classroom that has a lot of different racially mixed - English Language Learners and that kind of thing. That is an advantage. I know that the student teachers have to get experience with that too.

That's another thing, last year I didn't have an ELL class - my class was not ELL, but the student teacher was placed in my room anyway, but then she was supposed to teach lessons to ELL students. So, literally, she had to go from my classroom to another classroom that was designated ELL to teach them lessons - that was kind of funny! She went over there, but I was still her classroom teacher and helped her connect with another teacher. This year I do have an ELL class so if she has to do anything related to that then she's good. I know there are so many more requirements now than when I got my teaching credential that they are stretched really thin. Those heavy duty papers that they are required to do stretch them even thinner. I think it's a conflict - okay you want this person to be a competent teacher but you have to let them get that experience and to not be able to focus on that and not have to deal with the requirements, the heavy duty papers and stuff. If they had a quarter of basically instruction versus classroom experience and they went through that instruction and have them do the TPAs during the instruction and then two quarters of straight student teaching with minimal, short little papers here and there would be more beneficial. I know that's not going to happen either.

I think the biggest thing is the more time in the classroom and the more experience they have with the kids and having to plan lessons the better off they're going to be. That's why with my student teachers I try to get them pretty quickly to start taking instruction over, especially with the student teacher I'm going to get now because she's going to need to jump into it - it's pacing. The guidelines are pretty consistent and pretty vague and you work with it from experience. That other teacher that's got a student teacher is going to be reading that packet word for word, but I'm going to skim it and okay it's more or less the same thing - giving them experience.

Researcher: Supervisors vary - how is that experience?

Some supervisors came in on a regular basis, some stood at the door, some didn't show or came maybe one time. The supervisors change - different every time. No clue how they [supervisors] are assigned to you. This school and I have been selected many times but the supervisors have been different people. Like, for example, the student teacher that I am going to be getting, I should know who her supervisor is, and in my opinion, that supervisor should have already contacted me. She should have been in contact with me. She (the student teacher) will start on the 19th of January - day after Martin Luther King Jr. If she comes in prior to that it will be her decision to do that and her choice. Some do and some don't - it's very interesting, the ones that do and the ones who don't. It kind of tells you how serious they are about the whole thing - if they come in prior to their official day. If she wants to come in and give me the packet and talk with me, I'll give her the schedule I have and I'll let her know about what's going on. She will initiate the contact not the university. I don't know if the university suggested that they contact their supervising teacher or cooperating teacher or not. I know there are two other teacher here that are having student teachers and [teacher name] had told me, the other teacher, that her student teacher has not contacted her yet. So, I don't know - I just know that I, as a cooperating teacher, like to get a hold of that student teacher and I want the kids to be kind of prepared for it. They have written up huge letters, I told them it had to be at least one side and we talked about all of the topics they could be writing about. So that prepares them mentally and then when the student teacher gets that, hopefully prior to coming in officially, they can get a feeling for each kid. What this child likes about the classroom ... the kids tell them about the point system, getting tickets and different things like that so they write some pretty funny stuff and it gives them an insight to the student. I had one boy say, "I'm a very sensitive person" - it kind of cracks me up ... reading what they say is cute and that lets the student teacher feel more welcomed into the room too.

In the 20 plus years that I've had student teachers I've never had any kind of training as a supervising teacher or anything - nothing. No input ... from anybody ... ever!! It's strictly from my own finding out what worked and what didn't and pacing the student teacher's time because they understand pacing - they don't have that yet. They don't get it - they don't even get in a classroom right away. Until they start having to do lessons and know how much time the lesson is going to take. They don't get the pacing thing - they certainly don't get the pacing of their time within the classroom.

Researcher: How do you feel about training?

The problem with training is that it would probably have to be on my own time and it would be more than likely be uncompensated and I don't have enough time as it is. If it were a day or a half day that we got a substitute teacher and then I would do that - fine. Or if they did a small preparation thing here at the school and made it really, really easy, it could be okay. I wouldn't feel, now where I'm at, I wouldn't feel the need for it. But, for example, for the teacher that's never had a student teacher before, she's doing a little panic thing - like what am I going to do with her...? So, for her it would probably be helpful. It would give her an idea of what's kosher - what's cool, what's not cool. She's not your flunky. She's not here to let you slack off and sit in the back. That's what some people think it is and it's not. You're as involved in the lesson as they are, it's just that you're monitoring things and making sure that everything's okay. So, once in a while you

have to jump in and say okay why don't we try it this way - you have to be alert and aware of what's going on.

For helping out a new cooperating teacher, it might be okay to have a university class and have the supervising teacher talk about things, but it is more valuable to get help from a teacher who has done it before.

Can't think of anything else!
End of interview

January 8, 2010

Barb, First – second grade combination teacher
Signed consent form and agreed to be recorded

1. How were you selected to be a cooperating teacher?

Many different ways - one time was when we had class size reduction and nobody wanted the student teacher so I was the one that got her that time. Another time was when I was working on my administrative credential and the principal thought that it would be supportive - that it would help me out. I've had different student teachers at different schools. In [city name] I was selected because I was a transition teacher from Spanish only or limited English to English. What other reasons have I been selected... because I do a lot of different programs at the school and because I would cooperate and take a student teacher. The request usually came from the principal. Sometimes, though, from [state university] and that wasn't through the administrative program, but after I had a student teacher they would ask if I would take another student teacher because they knew me from having previous student teachers.

2. Why did you decide to have a student teacher?

I enjoy working with other people and having a second set of eyes and ears in the classroom. It allows me also to work more individually with children - one-on-one to meet the children's needs to be differentiated. I can spread myself thinner. I can watch their minds grow - not just the students but the student teachers also - they walk in the door one way and they change somewhat as they go through the time. Basically, I like it!

3. How were you introduced to your student teacher?

Email - usually I get emails – the student teachers were from [list of five different public and private California teacher preparation colleges]. I've had student teachers for a long time so there were actually times when we didn't have email so in those cases the principal actually would ask us if we would be willing to have a student teacher in the classroom (I'm trying to remember ...) and usually the student teachers ... back in [city name] before email, and in [second city name], the teachers would just walk in the door,

but you already knew they were coming. The way they're doing it now is you get an email ahead of time from the student teacher and that is also the way they do it with the ROP students from the high school. We get emails from them introducing themselves a little bit.

Researcher: Does anyone come with her on the first day?

No, they do come later - the last two times I've had a student teacher we did have a group meeting where an administrator came, but that was after I'd met my student teacher.

4. What information was provided to you, written or oral, to inform you what the university expected or student teacher required of you before, during, or after the practicum?

Previously, nothing was ever given. Recently they've started giving us a packet or folder - what it is they need to do - the TPAs and other things the student teacher was going to have to cover throughout the time - not just what she going to have to do while she was with you, but what she had to have done all the way through. So you could see what needs to be done so you could give her or him experiences so he or she would be prepared for what they needed.

Researcher: Were there expectations in there about your responsibilities as well as the teacher expectations?

Yes, there was a small packet in there.

5. What responsibilities did you have for the evaluation or grading of your student teacher?

You don't give the grade but you sit in at the end, on the final evaluation. You make responses according to what is their growth or lack of growth. You have a rubric you complete for different areas. So you have input, but you don't give them a grade. That falls on the administrator. You don't get to recommend grades. You just tell them how great they are and hope they give them what they deserve. I have not had a bad student teacher. One student teacher I had was a male - this was in the valley and he was very opinionated and he didn't care for white people or women - that was a bit of a problem at first. He was Mexican and he was offended that I was working in a bilingual school. He felt no one but a bilingual person should be teaching bilingual children. He was not happy he was placed with me. I don't know if it affected our relationship. I think it took him awhile to realize that I really cared about the students. That's basically the whole thing in [city name] ... it takes awhile. You can't just walk into a bilingual school and expect that you're going to be accepted. You have to prove that you care about them. And so it's very upsetting the first couple of months that you're in a school. It's a very different culture. But once they realize that you really care about them, it's fine, but it takes awhile.

Researcher: Do the student teachers have that same cultural assimilation issue?

All of the student teachers I had were Hispanic. They were really trying to bring in more Hispanic teachers - especially in the school I was in - it was a Chapter I Bilingual school. I think it takes some time for student teachers to assimilate, however, they have the

master teacher there to help support them with the students and parents.

6. How did you and your student teacher set aside time for feedback and reflection?

Well, recesses. We took our recess time, lunchtime, and when the kids were busy doing an activity we would talk about things. She or he would do lessons and then I would give them suggestions - usually you start with the positives and then try this try that. Library time, computer time - all of the times when you have any down time. A lot of laughing and a lot of having fun too.

7. What contact did you have with university personnel during your work as a cooperating teacher?

Sometimes email, but basically it was when they would come to do observation - that's when you basically had time.

Research: Was there a consistent time or schedule?

There were schedules - they have a lead teacher, because we usually have several student teachers here at one time, so there would be one student teacher that would be the lead and she would schedule the observations and they would have them all on the same day usually. Then the time was scheduled and you knew about it ahead of time. They knew two weeks ahead of time.

Researchers: During that contact time was there a planned contact time with the supervising teacher or were they coming mostly to see the student teacher?

It was usually to do with the student teacher and, as a matter of fact the student teacher would give the lesson. She would finish with it, then she would leave with the student teacher and I would take over while they were having their conversation. Sometimes the supervisor would talk to you, but mainly it was about their interaction with one another.

Researcher: So you're contact with the university, was after that - or at all? It could be anytime - it could even be during the lesson. It could be before the student teacher started, it could be in the middle while the student teacher was doing the lesson, she could walk over to me and ask questions or while the students were having activity time, or it could be at the end, or not at all.

8. What compensation did the university provide for your work as a cooperating teacher?

Never! No- no course reimbursement, no free tuition, no tuition reimbursement - never. Nothing. While I was going through my administrative credential, a little bit would have been nice. The student teacher always did something nice for both the students and me.

9. What opportunities might be valuable for you to have in order to be better prepared as a cooperating teacher?

Well, getting my administrative credential helped a lot because I was exposed to things I

wouldn't have been otherwise. For instance, like the benchmarks, and different schools and how different schools use different benchmarks. And there are other places to find information and where to go online for things. Your computer is your friend. Administrative magazines that can help you with different things. (Request to repeat the question) What would I need to be prepared when they came in through the door...?

Researcher: As you become more acclimated with student teachers through your experience are you picking up ways to work with student teachers on your own or is there a theoretical, educational process that would have been helpful to help you learn those skills without the experience?

Well, perhaps if I had not gone through the administrative credential program, I don't think I would be as effective with the standards and my thinking. I don't think that would be my concern. I think my concerns would be more about are the students happy and are the students learning. Oh, I know that the standards are important in understanding and that looking at that to know where you need to go. I don't think if I didn't have that training I wouldn't know that piece.

Researcher: So prior to your administrative credential program were there things you think would have prepared you better to be a master teacher/cooperating teacher? I don't know. I just think that going through that program really helped a lot - for me. It validated everything you were doing and that you do. It gives you even more to fall back on and places to investigate.

10. In what ways did your experience transform your own teaching practices?

Letting go! Putting more on to other people. Not having that need to be so important. Try to simplify things for myself, which I'm not very good at. I always try to complicate things - reinvent every wheel you can think of. It's enjoyable to have that extra person around when you have lunch Being organized - when you have student teacher you can't just say, "Watch and see what happens!" You have to tell them ahead time this is what we're going to do today and you have to have those thought and those things organized before you do it. All those things make it better for yourself and makes everything move smoother. Probably my discipline policies, both positive and negative.

Researcher: Do they bring some of those skill sets to your classroom where you're actually learning from them when they're doing lessons?

You're always learning. As far as discipline or curriculum...they will come up with things. Most of them are first quarter student teachers. Usually I get the first quarter student teachers so it's basically their first time being in the classroom. Even the spring student teachers that we get from [state university], it can be their first placement and then they finish in the middle of the year - which I think is amazingly odd. But, I guess in a way, it's not as odd as it seems because they finish and then they can do substituting which gets them known versus ending and then having the summer off and in a way it's actually better. At first I thought it was really odd, but then I adjusted my thinking. As far as what they do in the classroom, most of them are timid when they come in. Some of them go on line, but there's not really much time to be creative. Our curriculum is so

compact already that by the time we do Open Court and the math, and Mountain Language, and the writing, and do the benchmarks, we do young author books, we do a play ... and by the time you get that done there's really not a lot of room for anything else. What I do find interesting is they'll start saying something and I think that really sounds cool, I'm going to say that and I say where did you get that from? And they say, "You say it!" So, it's an interesting thing to see yourself come out in someone else. Of course, they take it and change it into their own. But, still, it's interesting to see that something that you don't think is anything has a really big impact.

11. Is there anything in your experience that you would change or things you would do differently?

One is that they should start before school begins. They need to see how school sets up for those people that start in the fall. And they need to see how the school year ends. They don't see the beginning and they don't see the ending. That's huge because there's so much to do. You have CUMs (cumulative folders) and other important papers that need to be completed - I did pull them and I did do that. They also need to be around for report cards, essentially report cards to see how to deal with parents when they're sitting in front of you. The other thing too is I don't think they're given instruction or practice in how to do a report card. They need to know how to do a report card. Parent communications - I have my student teachers write letters to the parents introducing them. Only because one of my other student teachers did it, so maybe it was something they used to do and then they stopped it. I think it's really important to open the door between the parents and the student teacher. The student teacher writes to the classroom parents. I think that was important. Having the student teachers go into the staff room for lunch, I think is important. They need to have time to be around with the other teachers - going and observing other classrooms, just having that time.

Researcher: How is that (observations) set up?

I think they used to do it and then they dropped it. So that would have to be added because class observations used to be there and it doesn't seem to be happening anymore. I think, another thing, first grade teaching should be something that all student teachers should have to do - if they're going to be an elementary school teacher. I think every one of them needs to know how to teach first grade. First grade is one of the hardest grades to teach and if they don't have that experience they're at a disadvantage being able to pull out the phonics and pull out letters - yah, a lot of kids are coming to school who know how to read, or develop it in kindergarten, but not that many. And those kids that have their reading issues, you need to know how you're going to meet their needs. And for some reason those are the jobs new teachers often get.

12. Is there anything else?

There is one thing - an experience that I had with a student teacher that I'll mention - the supervisor told the student teacher that I if she was a principal interviewing that she would not hire her as a teacher and that she should think about another career. I totally disagreed with it. Of course it totally crushed the student teacher. She had some issues

with writing and she made errors with her writing on a lesson plan. I felt the way she interacted with children, was more important than what was written on a lesson plan. And, okay, fine, you want her to have somebody else read them, fine, tell her to have somebody else read her lesson plans and critique them and whatever. But, to tell somebody when they are going through the student teaching program and its their first time they've been observed and its the first time they've been working in the classroom that you would never hire them - that's not okay.

Researcher: Is that a perturbation of having such a difference in the supervising teachers that come? Is there a wide range of supervising teachers? Or a range in student teachers? They're (student teachers) all basically all the same. They all want to be teachers - they want to do it. I have not had a student teacher yet who was here because they wanted their summers off. I haven't had one who's here for the big bucks. I mean they are here because they want to be with kids and they like what they are doing. Yah, they need to build on their skills and they need to learn how to do things and they need to learn classroom management - that's the whole purpose of having student teaching. And who learns from being cut down? Start with something positive - try these things, or I wouldn't recommend that method because of this reason or that reason, but I'm not going to knock them down and crush their dream. And, we need these young adults. Researcher clarification: Do you think the student teachers are prepared - that they know what they're getting into when they get to you? Mr. Z knows because he also does ESS (after school program). I've had two ESS student teachers and they both were awesome because they already have had large groups they have to take care of. They've already figured out the management piece so they are ready for the next step. The student teachers are responsive to advice because they want to be here. They want to do what they're doing - they want to be teachers. The student teachers that I've had are still in teaching - one in Fremont, one in Alameda, one in Livermore, and one at a Christian school. In Paterson, where I was teaching my student teacher was hired at the school we were teaching at and I'm sure the gentleman was hired

Addition to interview: Prior mention of TPAs and student teacher workload/homework overlapping classroom preparations for the next day - adding stress from the university and detracts from the student teaching experience.... how do you feel about that?

Oh yes!! and they have to do reflections on everything. I remember the student teacher I just had was reflecting on everything! Do you have to reflect every single day ... ? I mean, reflect over the week maybe. Yes, I reflected with Pauline ... do they really need to write down all their reflections? What got me was that she got a good grade because the teacher liked her reflections ... well, your reflections can be made up!!! I mean, she did a great job - don't get me wrong, but reflections are ... very personal and it shouldn't really matter about your reflections! I understand that you need to be able to see that you were short in one area and you did awesome in another area and that you should reproduce this, but not reproduce that ... I understand that, but, ... every night??? I guess she was writing a page each time or a page and a half every time on these reflections and she got an "A" because of these reflections! What about what you did in the classroom?

Reflections are important, because that's how we improve and change, but reflections only are not going to make your test scores go up!

What about lesson plans?

The student teachers are required to do full-on lesson plans. With one student teacher I made mention of I had to read all of her lesson plans to make sure she didn't make any errors because that was an issue. I just thought it was too much. You need to have a direction - you need to know where you're going, but do we really need that much? And then she got put down because she had a lesson plan that looked like mine - WELL, she had her lesson that she did for her school supervisor. She had the lesson plan she had to do because she had to do them for me and then she had the lesson plan that I do so that she knew what she was doing and where she was going. She got reprimanded because she had those. You have to be able to see the big picture even if you do make them micro-manage which is what it feels like. The university is micromanaging with these lesson plans they're doing - it's too much. Researcher clarification: Are you involved in the TPAs at all? The TPAs are one of the things we have to fill out so we are involved in that. We have to give them a score of four to one. The only paperwork I have to do is the evaluation at the end with the rubric of how they did within an area. My general experience with supervising teachers is okay. I like some better than others. I don't really want any more from them than I already get because it's more about you and the student teacher. I think they need to know about us - that we're okay - that we're an okay teacher. Which they should because the administrator is the one who recommends us...but, I think there needs to be more ... I don't know how you would do it ... , but I think that who you select as your master teachers is really important. They need to be people that are positive and upbeat and they need to be people that will encourage them. Yet they still need to also be focused and conscientious. These people who get here at 8:25 and leave at 3:02 ... I don't think that they make good masters teachers, in my opinion. Or those teachers that think school's not fun. I don't think that those are the teachers that I really think that we need to have student teachers with. Even if they want one, I'm sorry, what are you teaching these student teachers? I think the master teachers need to have at least 10 years of experience. The reason I say that is they've seen a cycle, at least one cycle, go through. Five years isn't enough time - because you haven't seen what's out there and what other things you can pull from when you need to get something, like phonics, or whatever it is - you know where to go and where to look for something - for programs or materials. You look at benchmarks and you know you're having a problem with this and you know to use DOL (Daily Oral Language) because DOL will best address this. Or, I'm going to use Mountain Math because Mountain Math will do this or Step Up to Writing will best address this or whatever it is, you need to have somebody who's had years of experience - not just 5. In my opinion, yes you have your nice fresh teachers but they still haven't gone through all of those experiences to know where to draw things from and those experiences needed to be brought forward for the student teacher. If they don't have them then how are the student teachers going to get them? I was surprised by one of ours (teachers) that ended up with a student teacher and it seemed like it was going well. I was kind of surprised and pleased that it worked as well as it did because I was concerned. I just thought the master teacher needed some more time themselves and needed actually a little bit of PAR [Peer Assistance and Review] assistance themselves, but may be that was what they needed - that validation. So it helped them develop their skills. But, I wouldn't want to recommend or encourage that because it's not going to help. If it didn't

work that way it wouldn't have helped the student teacher and that's not fair to them. They're spending a lot of money to go to school. They need to have good master teachers.

Anything else? No

Interview ends

January 12, 2010

Cindy, fifth grade teacher

Signed consent form and agreed to be recorded

1. How were you selected to be a cooperating teacher?

A teacher in my school was the BTSA coordinator, which is one of the beginning support teachers associations and she thought, I think I was in my fifth year teaching, and she said, "I think you would be really good. Would you consider taking a student teacher?" I said, "Sure!" So I've had two student teachers every year since then!

Researcher: Did she (the BTSA coordinator) give your name to [State university]?

Yes, because my school district and Cal State Hayward had a partnership - there were two credential programs. There was a partnership program which was with [City name] and then there was the regular credential program. The partnership was different because those candidates who were in that program were usually waved from student teaching so they went into teaching in [City name] so they were matched - when you went into that partnership program you usually went to that school district. I have been teaching 11 years so that was six years ago.

2. Why did you decide to have a student teacher?

Well, I know that she (the BTSA coordinator) is a good friend of mine and I admire her teaching. I saw how she had student teachers in there and I saw how she was learning new things from them. I said, they're fresh out of school, they know all the new gadgets and techniques, so ... I said, why not! Why not! I remember I had a wonderful student teaching experience and I remember my girlfriends who I became long term friends with that I met in the credential program, and they had horrible student teaching experiences. I remember how it made me love teaching more than they did - for them it was different. So I knew that being a master would be influential in how they felt about teaching. So I felt maybe I could be that master teacher like my teacher was at that time, and encourage them and let them try things as opposed to a master teacher that says this is my classroom and you can observe. You're a guest. I did my student teaching at the school where I currently teach and my master teacher is still there. It was through [State university] and the partnership program.

3. How were you introduced to your student teacher?

Most of the time I was introduced by whoever is leading the program at [State university] would send me the name through as email. Usually the year before they would email me and ask me if I was interested in having a student teacher again next year. I would email them yes, they would email me back and say they will be contacting you. Most of the time the student teacher contacted me the summer before and said, I'm your new student teacher and my name is so-and-so. When is a good time to get together and meet? It was usually the first couple of days before school started or before the kids came. Then the student teachers I got in the middle of the year would be in the same cohort with the student teacher I had before. They would say you're getting my friend so-and-so and they would know a little bit about me and I would know a little about them from their cohort person. Then I met them on their first day they were assigned. The principal was not involved. The only thing my principal ever had anything to do with, I guess they could say yes or no to whether a teacher could have a student teacher or not. They didn't recommend teachers, but they said if a teacher wanted to do it and [State university] said it was okay, that principal had the option to say no, I don't think they should have a student teacher this year. The contact came from [State university] to the teacher. The principal had nothing really to do with it.

4. What information was provided to you, written or oral, to inform you what the university expected or student teacher required of you before, during, or after the practicum?

Every year we get a packet from [State university] saying what the rules and regulations were, but it wasn't until the last, I'd say four years, that they started have a training now for master teachers - like one day where you'd go in and discuss any questions or concerns or clarification. So, I think that was in the last three or four years they've had that now. It's one day at the beginning of the year. It's optional if you want to go or not, if you're interested in knowing if anything's changed for the requirements of the student teachers, extra assignments, projects that they have to do....

Researcher: Have you participated in that?

I did, the first time they had it. It's the same thing every year. The only things that usually change are the order of assignments and how long and I get that information from the student teacher or it's in that contract in that packet that they get.

Researcher: So once you do that, that's all there is?

Yes! How long ago did you do that? Quite a few years ago - I want to say to four years ago or about four years ago. Are they continuing that? Yes, because every year that I get a student teacher they email and say there's a day for two hours if you want to come. It's a discussion on what the expectations are - for the student teachers and master teachers. It is during the week, usually in the evening at a school in my district. Ever since ... it's not a partnership anymore with my district, but the university holds classes at my district and so there's a lot of communication between the district and the university. I don't know how it is in other districts, but it's easy to get information. It's easy to contact somebody. They have classes there.

Question #5: What responsibilities did you have for evaluation or grading of your student teacher?

Besides every day talking or helping them reflect on lessons they taught or helping them plan - we just had the one three-way evaluation at the end of their time with us. It is a number system. I filled it out and then the supervisor filled it out and then talked about. We filled the forms out separately and then talked about it together and we give the feedback to the student teacher right then - it is at the end of the placement evaluation. It is not a grade, but rather "mastered it" "not mastered it", "didn't see it", "still working on it". They get observed a few times - I'd say like four times each placement. They do two placements in my district. So they do the lower grades and then the upper grades and then throughout those two placements they get observed four times each. Those observations are written and that's what they get at the end. I get a copy and they get a copy of all of their evaluations. I've never seen anybody fail even those I thought might not be right for teaching. They never failed they just were marked where they were at - you're competent, you're masterful, or you're still working on it. You're marked in the areas of - it went from knowing how to plan, the way you interact with students, the way you interact with parents, the way you interact with other teachers, with the whole teaching group.

6. How did you and your student teacher set aside time for feedback and reflection?

Most of the time, I get a prep - I'm lucky - every day - I get prep for 40 minutes during the day - and so a lot of that time is used talking about or reflecting on what we did that day or anything that happened. I'm open in my class, and I have an open door policy so there's always people coming in and out of my room. So, my kids know that there's always going to be more than one teacher in the room. So knowing that we're going to have a conversation once in a while when they're working on something - it's always okay. So I have conversations throughout the day too even when the kids are working, so that we can have immediate conversations about reflection. It's quiet between the two of us - the kids aren't disturbed by it. It is throughout the day and then during the prep time and sometimes after school. But usually they have classes so they're rushing out the door and the morning is too early for most kids. I get there at 7:00 and they get there at 8:00 and by the time they get into class there's not a lot of time to talk - so it mostly throughout the day.

7. What contact did you have with university personnel during the student teaching practicum?

We have contact through the email or when they come in to observe. When the supervisor comes I'm there but I don't sit in and listen to their conversation although I do get a copy of whatever their conversation was. It is not until the 3-way that I sit and listen. I am there when they're getting observed. It depends on the supervisor. Most of the supervisors want to talk to you for a few minutes before or after the teacher does their observations. When they're there I talk them real quick...."How are they doing? What do you think?" The BTSA coordinator, every school has a BTSA coordinator, which I find is the mediator - there the one who mediate between the university and the student teachers

and the teachers. She (BTSA coordinator) is, and I know BTSA coordinators at the other schools too, that they're always in contact with us. They have student teachers - so any questions I have I go directly to them because I think they go to meetings once in awhile. I know the BTSA coordinator at my school actually teaches class at [State university] for the credential program. But the other coordinators, who are not affiliated with [State university] that much, other than just being coordinators - they are always talking to the university. It's easy to get information.

8. What compensation did the university provide for your work as a cooperating teacher?

The university – no; my district - yes. I think the first two times I did it they gave me a little stipend - \$400. Then a couple of years later it was a gift card - thank you \$25 - thank you for helping us in the program. I believe that came from the BTSA fund that our district had - our district has a strong BTSA program so I believe that came from the BTSA program. There is no course reimbursement or other compensation.

9. What opportunities might be valuable for you to have in order to be better prepared as a cooperating teacher?

When I was student teaching I had some classmates that really had horrible student teaching experiences. Every year, I have my student teachers - because they talk to their master teacher about other cohorts - they're still saying they're having problems. There are teachers who are taking student teachers who don't openly welcome people into their classrooms. It's like ... why do you have a student teacher if you're not going to let them try things. If you're going to tell them this is the way it's done - you have to do it this way. So I find that every year there are still student teachers who are complaining about "my master teacher doesn't let me do anything unless I ask. I feel uncomfortable in the classroom still. I can't even tell a kid he can go to the bathroom if they ask. I'm worried ... they want me to do it their way." It's really an experience for them. They're supposed to observe you, I believe, and then try it their way whether they do it their way or. I don't know ... I just find that there's still no right way - there's still no perfect way. Everybody has a different opinion of how to go about being a mentor. I think that if teachers who had never been a master teacher before and would like to try, I think if there was a class or a requirement, or maybe you had to take an hour, little training or seminar about how to be a master teacher or what would be the expectations of what a master does. Like you're expected to help them reflect and you're expected to let them try things and you're expected to show them how to assess kids and other stuff. I think that would have been very helpful. The training that I see happening right now is about protocol - this is what you do and this is what they're required to do - they're required to do a solo week and things like that - it's not more about how to open up your classroom or how to be a good master teacher. This other class would be a second level especially provided for first time master teachers. Maybe more experienced teachers could use that as well. Some people, it's hard for them to have you come to their classroom - you need to give a little bit of control away.

10. In what ways did your experience transform your own teaching practices?

That's the only reason I do it over and over again - because they are fresh out of school and they know all the new little strategies and new things that are coming up next or refreshing my memory of things that I knew but I forgot. I'm lucky to be at a school where we have an open door policy - which is nuts - it's very rare even in my district, the school that I'm at. Everybody's always sharing and collaborating, but even to share and collaborate with somebody who doesn't have experience is very helpful and of course it's helps having another set of eyes in your room with 32 or 30 students. I think I've had maybe 12 or 13 student teachers and I think out of all of them I've only had a problem with one. That's pretty good having for having that many. That one was because they didn't want to or couldn't understand the economics of the kind of children we have at my school. They aren't used to certain kind of students ...

Researcher: Is that because your school is culturally or socio-economics diverse?
Yes, both socially and economically and this person didn't come from that and didn't understand certain things. So it was hard for me to teach somebody how to reflect and try to understand those things when they were already in their late 40's and had never worked in their life.

Researcher: What happened to that person?

I don't think they went into teaching - from last I heard they couldn't get a job in the school district they wanted. This was very personal and really with the university - I haven't come across where my opinion was that important. I'm sure it is looked at, but I don't think master teachers can make or break them just by their input.

11. Is there anything about your experience that you would change or things you might do differently?

I do eventually want to be a BTSA coordinator. I just can't do it because the BTSA coordinator at my school has been doing it for 15 years and she loves and she's the best so I've got to wait until it's my turn. I would love to match up people - I think that is really important. Even some of the great teachers that I know who take on student teachers sometimes have problems with it because it's hard to have another person in your classroom and that's your baby! I would love to try to match people with each other. I think that is important - not that you get along with you master teacher, but that you feel comfortable with each other ... to succeed and learn from each other for both the master teacher and the student teacher. I learn from student teachers all the time. I tell them I make mistakes every day and I'm sure you'll catch them. But, that is a part of growing and being a better teacher everyday. You're never the best, you're always growing, you're always becoming better.

Research: How would you do pairing up (of master teachers and cooperating teachers) differently?

I think it is really important to get the right master teacher because, I know from hearing from other colleagues, "Hey, I wish I had student teacher so I could do nothing or I could

sit in the back and check my email or whatever! it is. Oh, you're never working because your student teacher is doing solo week" You get those teachers who take on being a master teacher for the wrong reasons. Even that first initial choosing of master teachers...like I said there are problems. Two of my girlfriends who work in the same district that I do who were in the cohort with me who had horrible experiences still went into teaching, still love it, but are traumatized from things that happened. I find it hard. I was sitting with them while they're crying and I had wonderful day - I got to do this today and my master teacher showed me how to do or handle this or let me talk to a parent. Then, they didn't get that experience - I felt really bad for them and I felt like they didn't get all they could out of student teaching. Maybe in that initial ... maybe some people are not good for master teachers, maybe they shouldn't be even if they want to be. First, initially, weeding out that and then matching up people, For instance, at the moment I'm getting a new student and the person from the university and the BTSA coordinator in my district picked me for this person because he had a problem with the master teacher in the last placement. So, sometimes it's like ... at the beginning of the year they just have to pull a name out of a hat because you don't know the student teacher yet because they're' brand new to the program and so it's just like you go here and you go here. The second time around you can, the coordinators or whoever, can figure out a little bit better the personality and then if you have a pool of master teachers that you know you can say, "I think you'd do well with this person. This person had a really challenging placement, but I think you can handle it." Hence, I'm taking somebody next week who might be a little eccentric, somebody who might be a little more aggressive who wants to do lots. But, some teacher might be uncomfortable with letting somebody whose inexperienced try things. I think the pairing is deliberate because if this person, this student teacher, gets another placement where he's not going to well in I don't think he's going to love teaching or he's going to not get all of the experiences he could benefit from. So hopefully I can give him a better opportunity to learn some things through experience instead of having his whole student teaching be nothing but this was worthless. Which I hear from student teachers saying this is worthless. I didn't learn anything. And then you hear student teachers saying, 'Oh, my gosh, if I wouldn't have been here, I would have failed my first year of teaching!' I think my student teaching prepared me but my girlfriend, who had a horrible student teaching [experience] said it didn't help me at all. If I wouldn't have wasted all of my hours doing student teaching, I still would have been the same as I would have been the first year. I would have just read books and finished the credential program and went in to teach. Other than a little interaction here and there with some of the students ... if you're just sitting in the back observing all day long, not being able to talk to students in class ... I think these failures fall at the master teacher's feet. When you're called "master teachers" because you're supposed to be experienced. The student teachers are new to this, they don't know what to expect, maybe they do, The student teacher I had this last time around had been an aide. She had been in and out of classrooms for six years. She wasn't a teacher, but she had been in the schools so there wasn't a lot for her to learn, although I think experience every day is learning. But she knew a lot more than some student teachers who come in and never even been in a school or never been in a classroom where kids are learning and you're observing - never been around kids at all. It's a huge range. So, I just think that it is up the master teachers to take on that job, to take that time. Yah, I have lots of things to do - I have to plan for lessons,

I'm other things, but I have to keep that time sacred if my student teacher needs a poem or I need to reflect with him on something, or plan for something that's coming up or I need to be there to answer some questions about an assignment they have I have to set aside the time. I cannot just tell them I'm busy, I have to get the classroom ready, I've got things to do. I think there are some people who don't set time and I think it's really important that if you take on a student teacher then it's your job to help mold them.

12. Is there anything else/

Researcher: You mentioned that an unsuccessful or a problematic student teaching experience may be because a master teacher was either untrained or took on the responsibility for the wrong reasons. Is there a solution to that?

A little of training before even for that master teacher who just wants to do it so they could have extra help - if they understood the impact that they could have on a student teacher, I think they would try differently. I do want to say also that there are also some student teachers who think they want to go into teaching and it's really not their thing. So they come and I've had a student teacher and it was really hard for me to push them to try to do things because they really did want to just sit back and watch. It was easier than to try to do things because they did just want to sit back and watch - it was easier than to try and do. But, that's how some people learn by doing and some people learn by observing. So I knew a little bit of that was that she just needed to observe and watch instead of just doing. Sometimes I thought that it was a little lazy on his part too. He didn't get a job like most of my other student teachers did. I want to say that it might have been on his part too because he didn't put in wholeheartedly or take chances. It had a lot to do with the weight on the student teachers during this year. I think in the credential program, for the beginning of the year, it's a lot of work that they have to do. Well, I wouldn't necessarily say hard work because most people who are going to get their teaching credential are in a certain mind set that they want to learn about all these things - how to teach reading, how to do science, and to do all these things... but, I think it's a lot of work! I see them stressing out because they're student teaching for, I don't know how many, hours a week then going to school for how many hours, then expected to do assignments and plan lessons. Then still, some of them have a family, some of them are busy, and I see them all burned out - even the single ones, living at home, straight out of almost high school - to the ones that are married and have been in school for years. I think it is a lot of work for them and it can be stressful because they're trying to balance so many things. I think they should be separated, but I don't know how they would do that because they go together. You learn how to teach reading and then you're in the classroom and you try it or you get in the classroom and you get to see it. So it goes hand-in-hand, but at the same time they have all these assignments due all at once. They all these things they've got to do for this class and this class yet you're expecting them to be a participant in your class when they're there. Every year, every student I see stressing out a period throughout the semester because they're trying to make in out of the credential program. They want to go into the classroom right away but it's jumping the hurdles for them. The requirements for paperwork are mostly from the university. I don't have any requirements for them. Most of the student teachers want to do more than I ask for classroom involvement. They ask, "Can I teach this from now on? Can I do this from now on?" So I go by their requirements - I ask when do you have to do your reading lesson? - when do you have to

be observed, but I don't have any requirements for them. I don't look at lesson plans, but I help them plan and we sit down and say this is where we're at in reading, this is where we're at in math, this is where you should teach a lesson in this. Do a lesson on this ... go for it! You want my help ... ? I'll help you. You want me to show you or tell you what I did, you want to just do what I've done before or do you want to come up with your own? It's up to the student teachers. The university requirements take up the bulk of their out of class time - like the TPAs that they do, getting their portfolios done plus on top of that making sure their classroom assignments are done.

Can you clarify TPAs and portfolios and university requirements - how knowledgeable are you about that and how involved are you? I remember when I was student teaching I remember doing a portfolio of showing that I knew how to plan math lessons, getting evidence of a social studies lessons, and so and so. But every year I've been finding with every student teacher I get it gets harder and harder for them and they're getting more and more stressed out and there's more and more work. These TPAs, I'm pretty knowledgeable about because I help them. In the BITSA program in [City name] if you're a master teacher - before you get your clear credential you have to have your first and second year in BTSA I and BTSA II- that's where I learned the TPAs and all those things. So when I got my first student teacher five years into it I already knew what it was. So now I still am aware of the changing of what they have to give evidence to show what they know or that they are capable of doing for each of the standards. There's a lot (eight or nine) that they have to show proof of.

Researcher: What do you see as the connections between what the student teachers are learning (theoretical knowledge) and their actual practice?

I think it's all relevant. I think that the TPAs are important, you see it everyday whether they can make the classroom environment, interacting with the kids, if they can provide a safe environment, how do they speak to other adults and parents, and do they assess kids - all of those things. I think it's relevant. I think it does go with their lesson planning. I don't think it helps that each professor expects a different way to do things. I think it makes it harder for them because they I have to think, oh, I have to do it this way for this science professor, but for social studies I have to do it this way. I think it makes it harder for them, but I think it's important because they need to know all the different ways that are out there. It prepares them better. I think it is all kind of connected because when they do those lessons - like the biggest assignment that I know they have right now is doing a case study, that is one of their big reading projects - I think it is really extravagant and huge and it's a big thing that takes forever, or a big chunk of their life, but I think it's important. Maybe the university can figure out what classes to do, when and rearrange the schedule so it isn't due at the same time and make it less stressful, but for a while it has been that everything is due at once. They have all of these projects and classes right after school. So when do they have time for themselves? When do they get a chance to run and get something to eat before they have to go to class? When can they experience staff meetings and things like that when they can't be there?

Researcher: Are they required to go to staff meetings? In the second placement, because they are there longer, they're expected to go to a few staff meetings, but not all. It is up to the student teachers because I've never had to fill out a paper to say to anybody, no this

student teacher hasn't gone to any staff meetings. I think it's up to the student teachers if they want to experience that. I've had student teachers who are real go-getters – this last one I had was a real go getter. She wanted to be at every meeting even though she had class 20 minutes later. She wanted to know, what time are we meeting? She wanted to be at that meeting with that parent – can I hear that? Then I've had other student teachers where I said, do you want to go to the staff meeting and they said no that's all right. But, I never had anyone say they had to do this many staff meetings. It is optional but it is expected, I believe, that they go to some, but there is nobody policing that.

One of the reasons I do this – I know I can be that influential piece in somebody's first beginning to teach mind that is refreshed and excited about it. I don't want it to be horrible for them. I tell every single teacher I get, this is your experience. You can sit back and just do nothing and watch and get what you get from that or you can get into with your hands and get dirty and try it – it is up to you. You get out of it what you put into it. If the master teacher was prepared and gave them the opportunity I think we could really help mold them just like we do our students – that's why I do it. Plus the fact that I get some great ideas and learn all the latest. I hear what their new fresh ideas are. I tell them, can you make me a copy of that lesson plan maybe I can use it next year when you're not here. I'm always saying that! They're putting lots of work into their lesson plans – so whether I help them with it or not – I say make two copies of that. I'll put it in my file cabinet and I'll use it, I'm sure!

Anything else? No
End of interview!

January 13, 2010
Debra, Kindergarten teacher
Signed consent form and agreed to be recorded

1. How were you selected to be a cooperating teacher?

Usually I've been asked by the principal. When I came here, I taught in [city name] for seven years before I came to [city name] and I had student teachers from [UC school, private university, state university]. It was always the principal who asked if I would like to have a student teacher in my class. There were several times when many teachers on the staff would have student teachers. I actually, when I started teaching in [city name], that was the school that I had done student teaching with a group of student teachers together. We had the "Match Program" at that time at [state university], now under a new name. We had come in a group and taught in several classrooms and then met at the school site as part of our student teaching experience. Then we moved to a different school for a second placement and then actually I moved back to the same school – [elementary school name] - which is not anymore. That's how I started in [city name]. Now when I came to [different city name] there were no student teachers here at all. I had completed my Masters Program, and actually my daughter was in her Masters Program,

and I went up to one of the professors, and I said, "You know what? I really enjoyed having student teachers in my classroom when I was in [city name] and it doesn't seem to be the policy in [new city name] ... why not?" And I think it was Dr. [name], and she said, "I don't know. I'll go and call the Superintendent and ask why." And she called and they said, "Well no, we would love to have student teachers and no one has ever gotten a hold of us before." So they started having student teachers at my school, here at [elementary school name]. I had usually at least one [student teacher] a year sometimes, or most times actually, 2. So most of my teaching career I have had student teachers. So I kind of feel responsible about getting the school [state university], here at [elementary school name]. Of course, I talked to the principal when I got back from that meeting and I said I had talked to one of the professors at [state university] and they said they would probably would enjoy having some [student teachers] here at our school and so that's how it happened.

Researcher: You said earlier the principal is contacted - how does that happen?
The coordinator calls the principal, really now it's all email. It used to be calls, but now it's email. A lot of times, like this trimester, or this quarter for them, our principal emailed her and said I've got two teachers who would like to have student teachers this quarter. She emailed back and said we can't find placements - we've got not enough student teachers for the placements that we've been offered.

Researcher: Is it usual for the principal to initiate the contact with [state university]? The principal calls?

No, usually it is initiated by [state university]. They have an agreement with the district. Each of the university bodies have to have an agreement with the individual districts and it has to be agreed on by the Board of Ed for that district to allow student teachers to come to the schools.

2. Why did you decide to have a student teacher?

I am one of those people who feel like ... I had another career. I was an interior decorator. I did model homes all over the United States, actually worldwide and it was the most fatiguing, horrible job that I had ever had. Everybody would think it was glamorous and you go all over the place and you do this ... well, no! I lugged stuff and I hammered stuff and I did all kinds of stuff getting things ready and it was never good enough!! I started, when my daughter was young, volunteering in her classroom and it was just the greatest joy to me. So, I went over to the middle school when she went to middle school. She said, "Don't tell anybody that you're my mom - QUIET!" Shhh - nobody will know. I just don't want anyone to know you're my mom." So, I said, "Sure, no problem!" About after a week she goes, "Hey, mom, come over here. I need some help!!" (laugh). So I was acknowledged fairly soon! I was really encouraged because at the middle school, [school name] here ... because we're from [City name] - I live in [village name], a village which is an adjunct of [City name] - they had a program with math. Being that math was my skill, it was a math lab so parents volunteered and I got involved in that. Then they got some funding and they asked some people to become aides. So I became an aide for a couple of years. I got such great encouragement from the math teachers. They said, "You ought to get a credential, you ought to do this". And I

thought ... I would love to do that. So I went back and took a couple of tests and things like that. I already had my bachelor's degree. Then I got into a credential program and it has been the best job ever. It's a challenge every single day and I want to be there to inspire, if that's the right word for it, teachers to really love what they are doing or what they want to do. I want to give back to the education[al] community as best I can and that is one of the ways I see doing that.

3. How were you introduced to your student teacher?

Well, usually, it's been my main experience that I get a phone call to let me know who they are, and it is by the student teacher, and can I make a date to meet with you? Now I am getting more emails in that regard. Then I usually invite them here to the classroom and then we talk for a little bit. I know, just to jump ahead a little bit, I had, from [state university], I've always been provided a packet and usually they'll bring it with them that time. They'll show me what their course work is and what they're taking at certain times, like what their focus points are during that quarter and then we'll start talking about how we can integrate them into teaching those particular topics so that they can get their credits. The university has never been involved in getting the student teacher together with the cooperating teacher, as far as I'm concerned. Recently it has been that the student teacher comes in for months or weeks or longer than that without a supervisor. They don't find out until after they're launched into the classroom. I think that is negative. I think it would be nice to meet, all three together right at the beginning and to have any questions answered by the university between the two of us, but that doesn't seem to be the current practice.

Researcher: Was that ever the practice?

No, not that I can ever remember. I'm trying to think when I had student teachers from the [state university], I don't even remember having a supervisor come in at all and I have had two student teachers in one year. I can't remember them coming in at all. I usually remember supervisors really well along with the student teacher.

4. What information was provided to you, written or oral, to inform you what the university expected or student teacher required of you before, during, or after the practicum?

Always as soon as they came in and they had their first class they would bring in a packet - it would have the evaluation forms, it would have the expectations of each of the providers - supervising teachers, principals, student teacher, supervisor - so there was a list and a job description of each of those. It also has what classes - what the expectations of the classes were, although as soon as you got going it all depended on the professor what those assignments were for the student teacher. It was a very clear packet, and I've always expected that and sometimes, depending on the supervisor, they might come in with their own set of evaluations because that's mainly what they're interested in and go over it with me. There have been a few who have done that.

5. What responsibilities did you have for evaluation or grading of your student

teacher?

Never grading, always evaluation. I usually see "met", "not met", "not observed" - that kind of a rubric. Other than that there is 1,2,3,4, but the last year they asked for numbers - they wanted all 1,2,3, or 4. So they evolve - over time they have changed. Actually I have had all positive experiences. I have not had any student teachers that have been real deficient. I have had super, terrific, student teachers. They are confident people. They want to do well. They are highly motivated and so I feel like everything has been real positive and that their supervisors see the same thing. Last year I had a student teacher who had ... she was afraid, because the supervisor knew her mother and she felt the pressure of her supervisor maybe taking back things to her mother. So, actually, we talked about it. I said you know she's a little bit nervous because you're here and you know her mom and all that kind of stuff. And she said, I swear to you, and I told your mother already - we will not talk about you until after we're all done. Then she went, ... sigh! Because she was afraid, her mother was a teacher, and she was afraid she was going to get the pressure of that and she wanted to be her own person. She wanted a bit of privacy. She got reassured and it was fine. But that was the only thing that we've had to do a little extra bit. I know there's been a couple of teachers who have not been happy at all with their student teachers and there's been a couple of times when they have asked them to leave. I have never, ever done that. There has not been one incident I have thought that this person is not capable of teaching. Teachers who have had trouble have to find another placement. They are not out of the program it just didn't work out here. They do go to another placement. I have actually taken student teachers from other placements that didn't fit and then they did well here. Sometimes their success is personal and I'm sure there are some people who are not fit to be teachers - or to be cooperating teachers too! I think that the universities, because I went through that process, they do quite well at filtering out those people at the beginning before you know. There are so many people ... I know when I was interviewed for my student teaching we interviewed in a team and there were three of us that interviewed with two or three professors. I felt like they just favored this one person. They just asked her all the questions, she was just so cute, and I was the older student so I was thinking no way was I going to get this and so I got accepted into the program. I went in and the professor was there and I just said I really felt like I wasn't going to get this. He said, "Oh you're well qualified, what are you talking about?" I said, "I really felt like you, the professors, really favored this one particular student" and they said, "No we didn't ... we kind of figured you out - then we tried to figure her out and we decided that she wasn't going to qualify." And I thought, okay, never rush to judgment. Isn't that the truth ... lesson learned! Thank you!

6. How did you and your student teacher set aside time for feedback and reflection?

Oh, my gosh, sometimes hard. I'm here early in the morning and that seems to be the best. I'm usually here before 7:00 - 6:30 or 7:00. If they come in before 8:00, we usually have time to talk about the day, talk about things in the future so that we can kind of keep ahead of things. I like to lesson plan a month, then the weeks, then the days. Then I manipulate things around in order to fit things in. So when they have to leave, usually at the beginning of the first quarter (fall), they're only staying one-half day and if I'm

teaching a grade that doesn't require that I leave really or I don't have enough lunch ... kindergarten has no prep - there is no prep at all for kindergarten. So fitting it into spaces like lunches, or after school, or before school is about the best way to do it. When I'm teaching first through fifth, then they usually have a prep time almost once a day and then there's time to prepare and show things more and to talk about things that are happening before so it influences what we do after.

Researcher: Are you running two Kindergartens - morning and afternoon?

No, we're doing a staggered schedule this year. Last year I taught kindergarten, this is my third year, two years I taught in a room with another teacher - she did PM and I did AM, so then we taught together all day long. When I had student teachers then I had time in the afternoon in order to talk to them and prepare. Then this year they decided to up the class size to 24 - we went from 20 to 24 - and then they decided they'd give us each a room so that we could have a staggered program this year. Next year they want full day - that's where they're heading and they'll probably go up to 26.

Researchers: If a student teacher comes in early, who sets the student teacher's schedule? The schedule is between me [sic] and the student teacher. They have to come in at 8:00 ... I'll have to step back ... in the workbook/packet it says the student teacher has to be there one-half hour before class and one-half hour after class. So the university does state times for the student teacher. But, if they want to come in earlier than that, they find out that they want to do more prep, that they want to talk to me more, then I am always open to them to come earlier or stay later. In the afternoon they usually have to rush to class. Their time is quite tight.

7. What contact did you have with university personnel during the student teaching practicum?

Usually a supervisor would see the student teacher four times in a quarter, which would mean about every two and one-half weeks. They would ... at least one of those observations would be during their solo time. When the university supervisors come in they usually touch base, but do not schedule time specifically with me. At the final, where we sit over the evaluation, is the only time that they schedule time. Sometimes they do it during a prep time (the teacher's prep time), sometimes they do it before school, sometimes at lunch ... but for kindergarten it is usually after class because I was in the morning. So, she would observe, then we would talk for the final evaluation and we would talk after class time. That is when the written feedback is also exchanged. The rubric is shared at that culminating meeting. This happens towards the end, usually during the take over period. Sometimes, it depends on when their take over time is. Sometimes a supervisor will say I want it at the very end and sometimes it's okay to have a week or so after - that way you can observe and reflect and still be part of the class. We've had a conference during that time, but usually it's been about the time they're doing their solo period.

8. What compensation did the university provide for your work as a cooperating teacher?

Well, you know what I think, the university does provide monetary compensation ... at one point I did get it in my check, but now I believe it goes in the school general fund or the district general fund. I do not think that cooperating teachers get anything anymore.

Researcher: How much was that? I believe it was about \$60 per student teacher per quarter. How is that money used in the general fund - is it designated?

No, I have no clue where it goes it just goes into the pot. The district uses it as they like to. This monetary reward is part of the district agreement. The district sees that it is extra supplies that are used and things of that nature. So they feel like they should be compensated. The money is not distributed to schools as student teachers are assigned - that may have been the way at one time. There are a lot of funds that get kind of mixed up into that and not designated. I don't know how we use lottery anymore! Do you? It gets all mixed up.

Researcher clarification: For your personal compensation ... is there any?

No, never, just happy to do it. I get a lot. The real reward is intrinsic!

9. What opportunities might be valuable for you to have in order to be better prepared as a cooperating teacher?

I've been thinking about that a lot and I've been thinking about that for many years now and I haven't quite come up with anything yet. I'm not sure I can be real valuable in that area. But, I really feel like the university needs to be more actively engaged with a supervising teacher and the student teacher here. I think that they need to come out in advance. I think they ..., and I know because I've had so much experience and I know so many people that they already know my philosophy and how I'm accepting of student teachers, so I can't say for me that this would be as much of an issue ..., but if I didn't have that relationship I would like them to come in and make sure I'm okay for that student teacher. I would like them to come and take a look around and see if this is the place they would want to have that particular student teacher placed. It's not individualized enough. I think everybody has a gift - either the cooperating teacher and the student teacher - they all have gifts to give each other, but they might just not match. I think that is the responsibility of the university to make it a good experience for both sides. I think that's part of their job. I always wanted to have the student teachers start before the first day of school and I think the supervisors should too. They should be part of the planning and the execution. At the beginning of the school year those student teachers should come in at the beginning and they should be there to the very end of their time. All of my student teachers come back for the last day of school because they want to say good-bye because it's their class too. That is not a requirement; they come back because they want to. It's what I want them to do too. In my classroom we're a family - they're part of the family.

10. In what ways did your experience transform your own teaching practices?

Every minute, every day!! Seeing yourself from other peoples' eyes in their perspective

is, I think, the greatest thing. When I think that I have got something down really good and then somebody asks ... can you explain why you said that in that way? ... oh, ... (laugh)... to have someone in the room to be your mirror is such a positive opportunity for yourself. And to be able to have that – nobody ... when you have a partnership with a student teacher in that way, you're helping them grow, but they're helping you grow too. That is the reward right there as far as I'm concerned of taking in student teachers - preservice teachers - is to build a relationship that often lasts - like [name] (a teacher in the classroom when I arrived). That's how teachers stay in the business is that you don't get a lot of "stuff" so you know those things are really important and those are long lasting and they really hang in there.

11. Is there anything about your experience that you would change or things you might do differently?

Yeah, I would have them be there before the first day of school so they can participate in the planning and preparing to get ready, so that when they have to do it the following year on their own that they've had experience or they've at least watched somebody else fumble through - the same thing about the end of the school year. I would like to have the supervisors treat the student teachers more as individuals and see them more as individuals more than meeting the criteria. And, what else would I like ... ? If I could have things the way I would like them I would think it would be really great to attend some classes with student teachers as a master teacher. Especially, I would think that would be something that would be a way for master teachers to take and find out exactly what's going on and what they're being taught and get a different perspective on education. I think that would also be something that would be real positive.

12. Is there anything else?

No, I think you've done really well, [researcher name], at asking questions that are really ... they cover the kinds of things that teachers expect from student teachers within the classroom.

Researcher: You made a comment earlier [going back to earlier questions] - a reference to the teachers having tight schedules at the end of the day and needing to be back at classes ... I'm wondering if you might expound on that a bit?

Well, through the eyes of student teachers, what they've told me about the classes, is that some are very beneficial and some are not. So some of them, they feel, are appropriate to what they are learning in the classroom and they go together and sometimes they think they are actually not helpful to them. The State of California has certain classes and all that they have to do and in some cases - I think it was a quarter or two ago - what they did was made symposiums instead of having that class right after so they would have to leave right after at 3:00 and have to be there by 4:00. They would have symposiums, So they would have a week of something - it would be later in the evening like 6:00 - 8:00 that they would have it and that would be the whole entire class, almost like block scheduling. They did the things that they thought, like reading, classroom management, they did those up front actually before they started teaching - I think the student teachers were real

positive about that because they felt like they got those things out of the way. Then the classes they had were every single day. So they'd be in the classroom for the day and then they'd only have two classes a week. That gave them a lot more free time to work on their portfolios and all their TPA stuff. This year I do not have a student teacher, but last year for both quarters they did have that symposium schedule. So it was fairly new - just in the last little bit. I think that they felt like they had more time and more energy to put in the classroom because they weren't battling back and forth to school.

Researcher: Can you speak to what you see as the connection between the theoretical and practice?

Well a lot of times I see differences in universities. When I had student teachers from [state university] they were very much on the theoretical - they did nothing at all at the university as far as practical - nothing. The practical all came in the classroom - totally. I would hear things like, this is what our so-and-so professor said about this and this - how does that look in the classroom? I would go, "OH - okay, let's set this up so you can see it." So, I kind of like that because then I felt like I was the bridge. [State university], they have tried really hard to teach at the university at the level where they get the practicum too. So when they come in they have an idea of how they believe it looks like. So if it doesn't look exactly the same, it is jarring a little bit ... hmmm, is that what you were saying? Is that what that is? Is that really how you take a running record, because at the university it's this and this and this ... and you're doing it this way and it's different from what they're teaching us. So, in some cases it is conflicting that way - I see positives with both of them. If you're getting the practical application at the university, they're trying to make that link themselves. They're not leaving it for somebody else to do because they might not!!!! So I see why they do what they do. We just have to roll with whatever. I think that I understand what they're learning and the connection to the classroom.

Anything else? No

Interview ends

January 20, 2010

Ed, fourth grade teacher

Signed consent form and agreed to be recorded

1. How were you selected to be a cooperating teacher?

I'm not exactly sure, but my feeling is that our assistant superintendent of schools, back a number of years ago, was in this classroom for a California Reading Day that we had. She was then hired up at [state university] in the Department of Education. So there was a connection with her and I think that's when my name came up for being selected as a mentor teacher. [State university], it appears to me what would they do is contact the principals and ask if there'd be any teachers that would be willing to have student teachers in their classrooms. We hadn't had any student teachers in a long time and after that California Reading Day and after she went up there, then all of a sudden a lot of

student teachers started heading our direction from [state university]. They would contact the principal and the principal would ask a few of us if we'd like them. That probably was about six years ago. I've had eight student teachers in all over the past six years. I have some that are in their first teaching semester experience and some it is their second.

2. Why did you decide to have a student teacher?

When I was going through the program at [state university], I had three student teaching placements of my own and I had the best mentor teachers a person could ever ask for and I was inspired by them. I just wanted to ... obviously, somebody trained me so I wanted to give back to the craft.

3. How were you introduced to your student teacher?

Basically, the student teacher would get a hold of me over the phone and we'd chat a little bit before they came into the classroom here - three or four days in advance - to find out what time they needed to be here, what to wear, etc., etc. They would just show up! The student teacher made the contact - the university did not. We did not have any meeting prior to the phone call. The principal gets the student's name and they forward the name. That's all I had - it was not really an introduction.

4. What information was provided to you, written or oral, to inform you what the university expected or student teacher required of you before, during, or after the practicum?

[State university] basically gives you a handbook for the mentor teacher. It states what our responsibilities are to the student teacher, what our responsibilities are to their program up there, and what the student teacher's responsibilities are to me and my students in the classroom.

Researcher: Could you expand a bit here?

The handbook has been updated maybe two or thres times - perhaps every other year or so. Some of the requirements are the same year to year. As the years have gone by the requirements for my observations of the student teachers have changed - a lot more focus now on TPEs and California Standards for the Teaching Profession where before it was a little more holistic. You just see them do a math lesson, was it okay? Was it satisfactory? You see them do a social studies lesson. Now it's a lot more refined as to what they are looking for. So, yes, it has evolved.

5. What responsibilities did you have for evaluation or grading of your student teacher?

Meeting after every time the university supervisor came - we had a debriefing - sometimes with the student teacher and sometimes just with the supervisor and myself. Each time we would go over what standards have been met so far in the classroom. Then we had a final debriefing, a 3-way conversation at the end of each of the placements.

There would be a check off of what took place in the classroom - what standards were met. The check off list is a progressive collection of student teacher work and checked off each time until all of the standards are met at the end. Up until the end it would be just me and the supervisor or sometimes the student teacher and the supervisor. Usually the supervisor had contact with me and we always knew ahead of time when the supervisors were coming. We would sit down at the beginning of the placement and the supervisor would come for the first time and we would calendar out when their observations were planned so we knew when the supervisor was going to be here and what kind of a lesson they wanted to see. Each observation they wanted to see a different lesson. Almost always they wanted to see an English/Language Arts lesson and a math lesson and some wanted to see a science or a social studies lesson. Generally there would be about three visits from the supervisor for each placement plus on top of that the three-way conference - or four in total.

6. How did you and your student teacher set aside time for feedback and reflection?

We mainly did it during our prep periods here and our lunchtime.

Researcher: How are your preps set up?

We have three 40-minute preps a week. Not too much after school because almost always they had classes they had to leave for - to go up to [state university].

Researcher - do primary have the same prep and availability?

Yes, we all have the same preps. As a rule student teachers don't come in early - once in a while, but not typically.

7. What contact did you have with university personnel during the student teaching practicum?

The only person that I really had contact with would be the student teacher's supervisor. I never really had any other contact with the university at all.

8. What compensation did the university provide for your work as a cooperating teacher?

They always offered a tuition free class that you could take. It would be more like a workshop up at [state university] through the Department of Education - if you were interested in taking it.

Researcher: Was this for credit?

I'm not sure ... I don't know. I never pursued it. I was never paid - never, no.

9. What opportunities might be valuable for you to have in order to be better prepared as a cooperating teacher?

That's a pretty good question because when I got my first student teacher I was pretty

nervous beforehand. It was like... I'm just going to be in here and it's my turn to show somebody what I do in here. What if the management isn't so great that particular day - on that first day? Or, what if I blow it? There was a lot of apprehension on my part. Things that could have helped me prepare for that ... ? I don't know, it's just one of those things where you're just thrown into and you give it your best shot. Maybe ... (pause)... I don't think there was. The best preparation I had for this was falling back on my experiences with my master teachers when I was going through the program and what they did for me and how they allowed me to start taking over lessons.

Researcher: How do you know when to allow students to start taking over lesson? It depends on the individual. I don't have student teachers sitting around in here for very long. I try to get them up and in front of the class the very first day to do something - to sort of break them in. I had one student teacher where she was very reluctant to do that. She was very shy and really didn't know what she was getting into, but most student teachers have been really good about that. They get up there and they try. As time goes on I release more and more and more.

Researcher: It sounds like you've had good student teachers.
I've had really good student teachers and I had wonderful master teachers.

Researcher: Has anybody here at your school had a bad experience? How did they deal with that?

There have been some placements here at [elementary school name], not in this classroom, but with other master teachers where the relationship wasn't overly harmonious. A lot of times it seems to be more personality kind of things or work ethic issues - being here on time. We don't have much contact with the student teachers, but we do with master teachers. At our school we have a lot of collaboration time so you hear a lot of what's going on in classrooms from the master teachers. It wouldn't be something I'd hang my hat on because part of it could be just a little bit of ill will or rumor or someone's feelings at the moment. There have been placement problems but it is not a regular thing. There have been times when things just didn't go well. The university supervisor would be talked to at that point about any issues they were having. This procedure is included in the handbook. The supervisors want to know if you are having any kind of difficulty or you see problems surfacing. They really do want to know what's going on. The contact concerning any problems is initiated by the master teacher.

10. In what ways did your experience transform your own teaching practices?

Well, I love having student teachers in here. That's why I've had as many as I've had because I learn a lot from the people that come into this classroom and the other adults. I've had kids (aside laugh!) right out of school doing their 5th year at [state university] and then I've had, my next to last one, was a guy in his last 50s who was making a career move. He had a very successful CPA business up in [UC school]. I've had the whole gambit of people and I just enjoy having somebody else in here. I'm also a firm believer that two heads are better than one and when you have two adults in here I can get twice as much learning going for my students. I think it values my students too. I don't know if

that's answering the question or not, I'm rambling (researcher reassurance)! It's been a good experience when something is going on in a math lesson and I think a concept needs to be shored up a little bit, I'm never shy about retaking the reins over because, hey, I've got standards these kids have got to be able to meet in April and May during STAR testing and whatnot. I'm very conscience of that.

Researcher: If you were teaching a concept and the students weren't getting it, have you ever had a student teacher say, "We just learned about this in methods class can we try it?"

Oh, yes! Let's try it and that's another thing they bring. They bring in new things they're experimenting with or heard of up in [state university] or in another classroom if this is their second placement - I say let's give it a go! It's fresh ideas and why not? I don't mind trying new things at all! If I felt there was a weakness then I would recover it. You can always do mini-lessons - we didn't do so hot on that concept with graphing so let's just start incorporating it and over time the next thing you know you've got that concept covered. If it didn't go well - what do you think they got out of that? I was examining some work here and what do you think? Do you think they have it? Can we move on and just keep retouching this ... or, what's the next step? Student teachers are usually receptive to this kind of feedback.

11. Is there anything about your experience that you would change or things you might do differently?

Not really, no. I mean we've only got so much space in here and our schedule's always the same and you never know what kind of kids you get on any particular year. I've had some student teachers in here with some kids that would drive anybody crazy! They were professional about it. Then I've had some, like this class, is just as easy as pie. The university supervisors have always been understanding to their student teachers, understanding of my students, and of me. I've only had one supervisor twice, the rest have always been different. I'm not sure where [state university] gets their supervisors. They're always well qualified - a lot of retired principals and whatnot that have been teaching for many, many years. They know what to look for and they know what they're looking at. The feedback is fair and valuable. They have good observation skills for feedback.

12. Is there anything else?

Yes, having a student teacher in the classroom makes you a better teacher. I have to rise up to the occasion. I was really apprehensive on that first assignment when somebody was going to come in here. Oh, I'd better tighten down on this management a little bit because somebody's going to be watching and taking notes - or mental notes at least. What goes on in here? What's it like? It is a great experience.

Researcher: How would you see the connection between their classwork and their practicum experience?

There was a connection, but sometimes it would be kind of loose. They would sometimes

be taking a class that wasn't overly relevant to what we were doing. They are overwhelmed and I understand that. I think the class work, the TPAs, I think it is getting more and more. Class work for me is less. When they are being observed I expect, and their supervisor expects, a full lesson plan - every base covered. When they're on a daily basis teaching a math lesson, I'm not expecting them to type out a lesson plan and have something visibly in writing, but they do need to know what they're doing. They need to take the materials home and they do need to study the materials, and what they're going to be covering the next day. We'll have a discussion on it before they start - what are the objectives of the lesson? Do have an assessment piece in here? Do you think you need an assessment piece? Are you going to collect anything from them? What are you looking for? These questions are driven by the way I teach.

Researcher: Are you following your plan or their plan when they're teaching?
Overall, they're following my plan. I've got the year pretty well laid out so we need to know where we are at every particular moment. So they've got to get on my plan. They've got to, going back to that one about is it okay if they learn something up there ... absolutely! Bring it in anytime, but we've still got to follow our calendar.

Researcher: Could you speak to your school population and is that why student teachers are assigned here?

We are a Title I school. We're 65% ELL, 73% free and reduced lunch, 65% Latino, 10% white, 10% African American, 15% Asian.

Researcher: What is your lowest performing subgroup?

The African-American group is. All of the lessons that are presented need to be fully SIDAE for our second language learners.

Researcher: When is first day of placement and when is the last day?

Their first day is right after Martin Luther King's birthday and that is probably about the middle of January. For that trimester for that second placement they're just starting the second placement up there. I don't know if I'm getting a student teacher. Nobody has been contacted here at school for student teachers so I don't know if the way the economy is if people are looking at different professions now more than they were before. On the first day here, it is basically introductions and they're just kind of starting to meld in with the kids. We do small groups, differentiated instruction, some math time some universal access time. I'll have the student teacher kind of working with some groups getting comfortable around the students. On their last day they're pretty much in charge of the whole show from start to finish. On the second placement they have a 2-week take over and a lot of times it's a week or two in front of their last week. It can be their very last day or their last day of their take over. It's usually not a full day either - it's usually a ½ day. Their time in here is usually in the morning. They start at 8:10 and usually at lunchtime, or about 12:10, they need to leave for [state university]. Then I have one or two days out of the week when they're here all day long. That's throughout the placement. They are never here all day every day for the whole week - ever! You know that schedule in advance.

Researcher: Are student teachers ever here on the first or last day of school?

No, they are not. I had one student start the first day of the school year with me. They showed up on the first day of school so all the prep work was already done. They were not involved in that. But, as far as opening the door and going out there and meeting their kids and - yeah, they were part of all that. Introducing yourself to them and coming in and talking about classroom procedures and start working on a few rules and what not - they do all of that. I think being part of the beginning is a hugely valuable experience. Most of them don't have any idea what goes into classroom set up. They walk in and they think it's always been this way and someday when I get my classroom I'll walk in and maybe I'll shift a few things on the bulletin board, but that's about it. They don't have any idea about ordering all of your materials and getting out to Wal-Mart and buying all the things the district can't provide you and reorganizing this place and cleaning it, figuring out what your lessons are going to be for the next year ...

Researcher: How well do you think student teachers are for that prep week prior to the opening of school?

Not very well prepared. How do you know what it's like until you've done it - kind of a thing that until they actually open up their own classroom, they'll never know how much work it is. During that period of time I don't really want a student teacher in my way. It's a time for me to figure out what I'm going to be doing for the rest of the year. I don't know if I would like that ... don't get me wrong, I'd do it, but when I'm getting set I'm going over 100 miles per hour around here and it's not a time for explanation so much. Although it would be very valuable to them, but personally, I just like getting it done, so when I open this classroom on that first day of school I'm ready to go. This classroom is ready. It would be less valuable for me to have a student teacher during that time, but it could be more helpful to them ..., but then again just coming in for one day of that ... I don't think that's a learning experience. I take weeks to get this classroom ready. It's working on this place - every year it's reorganized. I don't know how valuable it would be unless they were really willing to come in weeks early for that extra amount of time. I don't think it's as valuable as being in here when the kids are here because that's what they really need to experience: classroom management, curriculum, and everything else. But, the first day of school, I think that is a huge value to have the student teacher in on the first day of school.

Researcher: What is the biggest student teacher weakness?

Most student teachers don't realize how firm you have to be. You don't have to be mean, you don't have to yell which isn't my style anyway, but you do need to be firm. A lot of student teachers walk in here and they think I know so much about this topic (volcanoes) and when I start talking about volcanoes they are going to be so interested. My enthusiasm and interest is just going to spill over and they're going to be so enthusiastic about learning about volcanoes. Then they do their volcano lesson and half the kids are just drifting off and whatnot. Management and bringing kids around to focus - they don't realize how hard that is. So a lot of them walk in here kind of with this idea that yeah, yah now, it can't be that hard, it's only elementary school. I have a lot to offer and I've got a great degree and I've got all this life experience and it doesn't take long until they realize half the class isn't even paying any attention to a word of what I'm saying here. A lot of

them get frustrated with that. The reality is different, but the book learning is still so important. If I say this is what I'm doing they say oh, yeah, I sort of read about a technique like that. Don't ask me, I don't know where that came from - it's been a long time ago. I've got other things to do than read about the Jones method of strategies and all this stuff, but that doesn't mean I'm not using them. So, they do make connections that way.

Working with student teachers and elementary students is not all that different, but at a different level. I model and they watch and practice, I have not had an adult come in here and yell at kids, but it would upset me if they did.

I am not in the room when they take over - they are completely on their own - that's the way [state university] wants it to be. So, they are in here about 12 weeks during the first placement and about 16 weeks during the second placement. Out of the two, I think opening the classroom is much more important to see than the ending.

Researcher: Do student teachers know how to close out a room - CUMs, report cards, etc.?

I've had student teachers here for conferences, open houses - I ask them to be here if they can arrange it with their class work at [state university] - most are accommodating to that. As far as CUMs, they've never seen CUM folders before we go through them. I take them in there [the school office] so they see what is in the folders. It is part of the expectation - that they aware of the CUMs and aware of what's inside of them. Student teachers do talk to parents, but not without me there. After all, it is my student. I've also had some of my student teachers sit in on SSTs, which is very valuable. Some of the SSTs have been around behavior issues. It's been nice having another adult kind of validate and verify what I'm saying. But, as far as a problem between a student teacher and a parent, that has never come up. Those big problems really fall on my shoulders - I think. I could see value in the student teacher calling a parent with information, but not a conflict. If the conflict was of a nature I thought was large enough I would definitely want the university supervisor involved.

Researcher: One other quick question - when you talk about TPAs - are you ever involved in that university work - as a resource for the student teacher?

There is only so much I can help them with in that regard because I don't want them making any mistakes and I'm not exactly sure what all is being asked of them with regards to those, but yah, I'd help them. I do BTSA also - a support provider, I'm not doing it this year, but I'm familiar with TPEs and the CSTPs and all these things so, yah, I can help them to a limited extent. I don't mind doing it, but if you have more questions, ask the supervisor. Most of them are pretty good about that. Some supervisors are really strict about the interpretation of the TPEs, others aren't as much. There's a lot of latitude within the supervising community. They've all been good ... like I said, they've all been really good supervisors, but each one has their own area where they think the TPEs are of really vital importance to them and they might be looking for something else.

Researcher: I'm curious about BTSA - are there BTSA training pieces that help with your work with student teachers?

Yes! Learning the TPEs, learning what these things are and what the expectation is

behind them. Having gone through the CFAST events a hundred times, a series of files you go through along the year with a beginning teacher. I've learned a lot going through BTSA being able to convey some of that knowledge I've learned through BTSA to those beginning teachers is important, I can say your supervising teacher is going to be looking for this or your principal some day will be looking for this. Also cycles of inquiry - BTSA is big on that. Data collection and evaluation pieces from BTSA are helpful. Can't think of anything else ... I just love it! I'm a second career guy. I spent 18 years in the title and escrow business. Then I had this mid-life crisis and decided that I didn't want to do that for the rest of my life. I was about 41 when I was at [state university] and I've been here for 14 years so you can do the math on that one!!! It's something ... when I leave this room I want to leave it in good hands and it's probably going to be a younger teacher somewhere along the way and my thinking spreads out beyond that. I think that being a good mentor teacher is vital to education. This is the place...this is the laboratory...this is their test tube to try things out. And even to see if this career is for them. I've never looked back and I've never regretted the move. It took a long time for my salary to get back to where I was. As the years have gone by I've surpassed that, but I've never looked back with any regrets. It was a good change for me.

The interview ended!

January 29, 2010

Fay, fifth grade teacher

Signed consent form and agreed to be recorded

1. How were you selected to be a cooperating teacher?

Actually when I was selected this last time with [Private university] it was with a resource teacher aide that had been in my classroom and she asked me to do it. I think she felt we had a good rapport and she was working on her credential at the time. So the placement was initiated by the student teacher and the principal approved it. There was no problem so we just went forward with it.

Researcher: Is this typically the way you get student teachers?

Sometimes the school [university] will ask the elementary schools to host a teacher. They just put it out there that people are searching for master teachers to do their student teaching. I like doing it because I remember what a great experience it was for me. I really think I had a great experience on both of my placements. [Private university] allowed me to choose the teacher and I had gone out and observed many teachers before I decided. I was going to make sure that for me, at the time, they said you could choose where ever you want. I wanted to be close to home so when I was done I could at least go home and not have to drive a long way to school and home. So, I checked people in [city name] and that's how I chose mine. They were really great experiences and so I just felt like I'd like to give back.

Researcher: Now if you were recruited by the principal, would you volunteer?
Absolutely!

2. Why did you decide to have a student teacher?

To give back and give the experience to someone else, and hopefully make it a positive experience for a student teacher in training. I think that the training is so valuable. I don't think anything beats having that time with a real class under real situations. I try to make it as real as possible - allow it to be as real as possible.

3. How were you introduced to your student teacher?

This latest student teacher was a school employee so we knew each other before the placement. I think years ago when we were introduced it was because she was an aid in resource and there were a number of kids in my class that were in resource. We were doing it [resource instruction] where she came into the classroom instead of pulling the kids out because it was during a math rotation - that was years ago. [Student teacher name] was one of the aides that was coming in. So she was helping in the classroom during the math rotation for the lower kids at that time. So we got to work together first in that situation.

Researcher: Do you know how it would have been at [private university] if you had not already known your student teacher?

I don't know, but when I was a student teacher at [Private university]'s I was told to go observe, they told us to observe at least 10 [cooperating teachers]. So I think I went out and observed about 20 teachers. I just said, can I come and observe and that was just in [city name]. Throughout that process I observed. The one that I did for my first placement was a fourth-fifth grade at [elementary school name] and I walked in and I was there for hours. I just thought I love this room. I just love what's going on here and so I did ask her if I could use her as my master teacher. The second one I needed to be in a class for my CLAD so at first the principal suggested that I be in a different classroom and the teacher somehow did not start when school started. I wanted to be there on the first day of school for that one because that was in the fall. The teacher was not there at the start of school; I think she was sick or something. So, this was not the principal's first choice but it turned out to be really great for me. It was in a bilingual class and so it worked out and that teacher and I are still in touch - that was at [Elementary school name].

Researcher: Have you had any other student teachers?

Yes! I had a guy, a long time ago, and two other women so I've had four from [private university] and [state university].

Researcher: So how did you make the initial contact with the others?

One of them I knew as a parent of a former student. She contacted me. She asked me to be her master teacher and I agreed and then the principal put out the other two names and I volunteered to do it. I am in touch with the women but not the guy. I found out about

them through an email saying we need master teachers. At that time I think [state university] was contacting us more than they do now.

4. What information was provided to you, written or oral, to inform you what the university expected or student teacher required of you before, during, or after the practicum?

[Student teacher name] gave me a packet that said these are the things I'm going to be expected to do and you're expected to do as a teacher, These are things I'm expected to do as a student teacher and that we'd like you to do as a master teacher - to give me some guidelines as far as allowing her the time to do the lessons as required and when they're needed with enough time to do the lesson. Also giving her feedback and the opportunity to work in the classroom. She always kept me abreast of how much time she had for her lessons, when she needed to have it so that she would have time to prepare for it. [Private university] provided that to me through her. She would always let me know when she went to class if something was coming up and she needed to have time to prepare. So we would look at the schedule and allow her to put it in there giving her time to work more than one day on whatever lessons she needed to work on. I try to get her involved as much as possible right away. I let her get comfortable with the class and gradually do a little bit of everything so that when it came time for her to do lessons she was feeling really comfortable with the class. That timeline was laid out in the packet of information.

5. What responsibilities did you have for evaluation or grading of your student teacher?

I believe they wanted to make sure that I gave her feedback whenever she did a presentation or even as she would prepare her lessons. She would ask me to look at her lessons and I would give her some feedback and let her know, number one to make sure that it fit into what was going on in the classroom and the curriculum standards for fifth grade. She was really good about making sure that those lessons aligned to the standards. Also I would literally jot down notes every time she did a lesson in front of the class and we would sit down so I could give her some feedback at the time. So we set the time to sit down everyday after school, unless she had to leave for class or something, we'd sit down and talk about how the day went and she could take notes about what was going on. That would even be for me or her. I always made sure I did a lesson in a subject before so that she could get an idea - I was always modeling myself - modeling for her what she needed to see so she would be comfortable.

Researcher: Was there an expectation to write up observations for the university?
I had to do some sort of written evaluation for her on how she was doing. I didn't have ... I'm trying to remember ... if the supervisor came and we sat down, the three of us to talk about how things went. I just don't remember that part. Most of the time her supervisor and she would go somewhere else after so that her supervisor could give her feedback on her observations. So she was doing it during the school day and the contact was mostly between the student teacher and the supervisor and not me. I know when I was a student teacher; especially at the end we had a tri-meeting so that all three of us would sit down.

We all three wrote our evaluation of how things went and shared that in a meeting with all three of us together. I don't remember that happening, necessarily, with [private university]. I think the supervisor assigns a grade for the practicum. It is more of a written out evaluation rather than check off boxes. I think it was basically met requirements and a script or summary about how things went. My experience was very positive, but if there had been a problem, I don't know. I'll tell you with two of the student teachers I had it wasn't all positive. The one guy that I had, it was like he just really didn't like teaching and the kids felt that and they commented back to me. I relayed that information to him that should he decide to go on.... he did what needed to be done, but it was almost just a job. The kids didn't feel he was enjoying himself. He never smiled, that he just didn't like what he was doing. That was information I shared with him and the supervisor. I think he was kind of cautioned that he might want to think about that and make some changes on that. The lady that was a former parent, that was probably the one that got to me the most because that was definitely me asking her, "Why did you go into teaching?" Because it was just not a good match, in my opinion. This was very difficult for me perhaps because I knew her as a parent as she came to our school and I knew her personally and it was very hard for me to do that. That was a closing meeting that was full of tears and me saying maybe you need to be thinking about something else. She said she wanted to do this because "it works for my schedule. My husband is in education and my kids are in school and so I want my summers off." I said that's not a good reason to go into education. It was recommended that she do it again because she did not pass this section of student teaching at all. That was a collaborative agreement between me and the supervising teacher – we both absolutely agreed. The supervisor said it had happened before, but they didn't tell me that ahead of time. This was her second time of being told maybe this isn't really right for you. She felt that since she knew me that she didn't have to do certain things and I felt like she was taking advantage of knowing me before. But I was really trying to go by their guidelines and these are the things you need to do. She would come up with excuses why she didn't have this done, didn't have that done and so it did come up and this easily didn't pass. So she had to do it [student teaching] one more time and I think she did. The last time I've heard from her – I have seen her a couple of times, I think she is teaching in [city name] but I don't what grade or school. She did move on and finish somewhere else. That was a tough one. You think that when people ... you hope that when people go into it [teaching] and they get that far and they've taken all the classes that they really do know that is what they want to do and that they will really put their all into it and do a good job. That wasn't really the case in this case. She was really trying to take shortcuts and I felt like that was because she knew me personally before she started working here. That's why I felt she asked me to do it. I know her, she won't fail me ... kind of like that attitude.

6. How did you and your student teacher set aside time for feedback and reflection?

We met during preps and we also met after school. We just set aside whatever days we knew that she went to school and I believe we worked around her school schedule to make sure we set aside time whenever she was needing time. We talked a lot. Any time we had time to talk we talked. We had a really good rapport so we had a lot of time to talk with each other. She took lots of notes and we shared lots of literature and stuff

amongst each other so that she could be reading it. If she could get time to read it - whatever she was learning about in whatever subject. I would pull up stuff for her and say here's something you might want to look at or here's a lesson you might want to think about and add your own touch to it or whatever.

7. What contact did you have with university personnel during the student teaching practicum?

I don't remember having any contact; honestly, it was very little if any. There was an assigned supervisor. She met with the student teacher - they had contact, but I didn't have much. We talked briefly whenever she came into the room - when she would come to observe her and we would talk when she came into the room or something like that, but we didn't really talk a lot. I don't know if we need to or not, but I suppose especially if things are going well you don't really have to talk that much to them.

8. What compensation did the university provide for your work as a cooperating teacher?

"Thank you!!!" (laugh!) Yah, I don't remember any course reduction of anything like that even. At [private university], I don't know if they still do it or not, but they used to give you a unit off or something - a free unit toward a class. That was at [private university] but it doesn't seem like I got any compensation that I remember. There were no classes offered that I remember for master teachers.

9. What opportunities might be valuable for you to have in order to be better prepared as a cooperating teacher?

I think for the sake of standardization or just knowing that everybody's on the same page and doing the same thing, maybe a short workshop or something like that ahead of time. They can say this is what we expect you to do, this is what we are looking for in our teachers, and this is what we are expecting them to do. So, you have basically, a summary of expectations. It doesn't have to be that long, but I think those kinds of things would be helpful. Certainly, like I said, I think most of them go well, but you do have, once in a while, some that do not go well. What do you do about that? How do you handle that? How do you speak about that because it can be a pretty uncomfortable situation? How do you deal with that situation - when a person isn't cutting it? What do you do about it? How far do you let that go before you - some red lights for somebody - or how do you say that? Do you let that person get all the way to the end - like what happened to me? Even though I'm sure I said something before then, but you let them get to the end and then say you're going to have to do this again. Can there be something that goes on before you get that far - for the sake of everybody involved? We need to make some changes or are you really doing the right thing here?

Researcher: If there had been a problem was the supervisor's contact information part of the packet?

Yes, I'm sure I had the supervisor's name and this is how to get in touch with me. That

contact would have been initiated by me because I would be the one who would know of a problem. By the time they get to the point where they are student teachers, they've taken all the classes, and they've probably gone through the this is what you're going to do when you go to classes - so they've been given some information about what to expect. I guess they assume you're adults, so we'll be there periodically to see you in action. If something comes up, you need to say something. I think they expect that no matter what. I don't think they're in there every time you do anything because they want you to have a relationship with the cooperating teacher - that you feel that is the person you need to go to when you need things. That is the person who should be the expert in the field. The first time I did it I don't think I even had that many years. So, it was, wow! Things are different now because the more you teach the more things you keep and gather more information over the years. What you do changes as you grow in the field too. I don't know if things would have been different if I hadn't known [student teacher name] and we agreed to work together without having [private university] pair us up. I just don't know. I think we, myself and the university supervisor, were in touch as much as we needed to be. I was satisfied with a somewhat more distant relationship. It was good and it was enough.

10. In what ways did your experience transform your own teaching practices?

I think that when someone is in front of you and you are watching a lesson, you know they have gotten all of the research behind that lesson, but they stand in front and even though they are prepared - it is different when you do it on your own. Standing there, you are helping them with a watchful and more critical eye. Every time you do that it also makes you think, "What am I showing to that person when I'm up there because they are watching me a lot? Am I doing the things that I'm saying they should be doing?" I think that is something that as a cooperating teacher I felt like that every time I was up front. What am I portraying for the other person? Am I really showing them the very things that I'm telling them they must do? And also letting them know that every single day is different and every single minute is different and every situation is different. So sometimes you might have to give a little with somebody that you wouldn't necessarily want to give that same amount to everybody. Every kid needs a little bit more so you always deal with that equity vs. equality issue. Everybody needs something different so you need to show that everyday. Some days you need to be hard nosed, but the next day you can give them a little slack for some reason or other. You have to show that. It is certainly a challenge and it isn't necessarily something you can teach somebody. You really have to just deal with it on a daily basis as it happens. I think, definitely, knowing that I am being critical to that person or telling them that these are things that I should see made me think back to me every time I had to do it. You do it to! (laugh)

11. Is there anything about your experience that you would change or things you might do differently?

I think the last one was a great experience. I don't think I would change anything. We had a great relationship. I think it is good to let people go and choose their master teachers because, like I said, the two I chose ..., the first one I just felt like we clicked. I walked

into that room and I looked around that room and I thought I want to be here because of the way it made me feel being in that room and what I observed going on. I think that my student teacher felt like we connected because of her experiences coming in and helping in my classroom. She said I had to cut up half the time or she liked the way I talked to the kids - sometimes it was nice and sometimes it wasn't, but we had this great relationship where we could look at each other across the room and laugh because of whatever was going on during that time. We both felt it was cool to be in a room with you. I like what you're doing type of thing. I think that if you have the opportunity to choose a person, and I know it's not always possible, but I think it's helpful if you have that person. Sometimes you get into situations where people feel I don't really want to be in this room - not like anything was necessarily bad in there - I just didn't feel like that was the type of person that I wanted to be around every day if I had to share teaching. I really like the way I was allowed to choose and that was after going around and seeing a lot of teachers. I think I had a great experience. I know it wasn't always successful for everyone. Sometimes you hear teachers saying, "Oh my gosh, I thought this was going to be a good fit and this person just didn't work out for whatever reason." I would think it works more than it doesn't - to be able to have a say. I actually had time to go out and look around and get into different types of classrooms and schools and I know not everybody had the time to do that. I also had it in my mind where I wanted to be because I had subbed at probably every elementary school in [city name] at one time or another. So I had some ideas of things going on at different schools. That and wanting to be in [city name] kind of helped me at that time. I would hope that it would work more often than not.

Researcher: What do you think is the driving factor on whether a student teacher/master teacher relationship is successful or not?

I think making sure that the student teacher and the master teacher both really do want to do it because if she (the master teacher) had said no and I had to go someplace else, I would appreciate that more than knowing that she didn't have the time to spend with me. So I think time is really important. Knowing that you have to have the time to spend together. How do you fit the time in? Well, we agreed, okay what days do you go to school and when do I need to be available. I felt that if I am going to do this right and be helpful to you I am going to make sure that we can meet on these days. We can be sure that during my preps that we sit down and talk together. We can make sure that I introduce you to my class and the parents so that right away you get on board and you are part of the team. That was very helpful. If you are the kind of person who is having a student teacher because you want a helper in your room and I know that that happens, then that doesn't work. The person feels like they're doing all of the paperwork. When do I get to do the teaching part or get the time to spend with the kids? That is why I'm going into teaching. I'm not really going into teaching to grade papers all of the time, even though that is a major part of your job. You still hope that you get to do those other things and make sure that we make the time to sit down and talk and develop a rapport so that we can be really honest with each other about everything. How did that go? What did you think? I was able to listen to her. Sometimes I was more critical of myself - well I thought it was going to be like this and it wasn't necessarily, so what happened? Why did you think it didn't go well? Well, this is what I thought and this is where I thought it should have gone or whatever. Also I've gotten, as my student teacher, she always put 100% into

preparing for a lesson. Which is absolutely awesome and I appreciated it and commended her on that. So I recognized that she had really put in a lot of time into researching and preparing for her lesson. I think that was important and I like doing that and it made her feel like she knew exactly what she was doing - I think. The delivery part - that is a different part. At first you're nervous and you know that as a teacher you give her feedback that lets her know its okay. It gets better as you do it so the more often you try to get her up here to do it the better. So you try to get her up there a lot and do it - not like they all have to be like you did all this research but here's the book and go over this. Then this is what you're going to do. Spend time with the kids - that's what you need to do every day - spend time with the kids. I made sure she had the time and we had a lot of time to talk and share how we thought the lessons went and how her delivery was and how her preparation was going. That's what I had too. Mine was, I watched her for a week, then she said get up, now start. Start, instead of just sitting. So I had a teacher that was really affirming what I should be doing as a master teacher. You should sit back and see how things flow at the beginning. Then after that, it needs to be; today I want you to do this, blah, blah, blah. Then gradually you build. You know you have lessons for your school that are coming up on this date so we look at the calendar and see that we need to build up to that and talk about it and make sure it happens. So that by the time she gets in front of the class she is feeling really comfortable - you're always a little nervous but its easier if you're prepared.

12. Is there anything else?

Researcher: How do you see the academic/university demands being in concert with the practical classroom demands?

I think that the two blended in together. She would say this is what I'm doing in class right now and so that's the subject that was the curricular area that her lessons were usually in. So then that would be the area that I would say, "Okay then, we need to make sure you do this kind of lesson in the classroom." I think that it worked well. I think it gave her an academic background. She was doing papers on whatever and so I would read her stuff too and see what she was doing so there was definitely a bridge between pedagogy and practice. I know when I was at [private university] when I was doing the social studies class and I was doing a lot of social studies in that classroom at that time. This is what I am doing right now. When I had a math class I had to make sure I was doing lessons in math. So those were the areas, during that time that I had to do for those classes. So I made sure that those were the ones that I taught in that classroom. I had to come up with the lessons. The academics were not distracting except for maybe the time. You wonder how you had time to do all that is demanded. Sit in class all day, then go back to class at night. It is stressful - it is a lot.

Researcher: Did your [private university] student teacher have a takeover period?

Yes, she had a whole week and during that time she was 100% responsible - I was totally out of the room. She was correcting papers, planning lessons, all of it. We met a lot then too; whenever we could meet, but she had a full takeover and I was out of the room while she did that.

Researcher: Was she with you and your class on the first day of school?

She was with me in the fall and she helped me get the room ready when school started. I think she was going to be there in the fall and believe that I said you should see what it takes to get ready to start the year. She was probably there more than the university said she had to be. I think after our conversation about seeing what it takes to get ready she came in. For one of mine it was in the fall and I was there even though I was supposed to be in a different room the day before school started. [Student teacher name] was actually helping get bulletin boards ready and getting nametags ready - I think that is major important thing to do. It doesn't just happen! I don't know what they think ... kids just think it happens. So you wonder, do student teachers think that to? Including them in all of the school events - CUMs, conferences (she sat in on conferences - I think this is also super important), Back-to-School Night, and all of those extra things. She was able to participate in all of that. I don't know if the university expected that or not, but I think, as a master teacher, I certainly said this is definitely something you should do. She was willing and wanted to do that. I think it is really critical that you see all aspects of that. You might have these conversations with parents that aren't necessarily easy to deal with - with her being an aide in resource she probably had to be in on those meetings when things weren't hunky-dory, but it was good for her to see the parents that go with the kids that you see everyday. You see sort of why things are the way they are in the classroom when you sit down and talk with parents. Just like every kid is different, parent conferences are all different - some are easier than others. You just have to work your way through them. So, yah, she was definitely all over any suggestions. She wanted to do as much as she could of the real stuff that happens everyday that people don't even know happens every day. You can't just tell people that, you really need to see that and experience that. You really have to do it! Like Back-to-School Night, you're just standing there in front of everybody and some people think that is more nerve racking to stand in front of all the parents and have that talk and be ready for that kind of thing. You just need to be ready for a variety of things that you need to do.

Researcher: In terms of evaluation, were you asked or required to do a letter of recommendation?

She did ask me to write her a letter of recommendation. I certainly didn't have any problem doing it because she had done such a great job. I think they do expect it, but the student teacher still needs to ask for that.

Researcher: Does the principal have any part in the evaluation?

She knew she was going to want him to write her a recommendation so she made the request for him to come into the room and observe her.

Researcher: Anything else?

I don't know how much contact the university has in this triangle here, but I don't know if any more is needed than what they do. Perhaps they feel it is the amount that works. Even the one that didn't go the way I wanted it to go it was still good for me to have to go through that. The reality is that sometimes it doesn't work as smoothly as at other times. I think it might be the amount of effort that people are putting into it. I know that if I work hard then you should be working hard. I would think you should work hard and not try to get out of work because you know me. Work ethic compatibility is big. This last one

worked really hard, She made up her mind that she wanted to do this as a career and I think she was willing to put in 100% to make sure that it happened. The other one, I think wanted it, for me, the wrong reason. Not that it's my decision, but in my opinion, because you want your summers off is not a good reason for you to want to be a teacher!

Interview now ends - recording is over.

February 3, 2010

Gwen, fifth grade teacher

Signed consent form and agreed to be recorded

1. How were you selected to be a cooperating teacher?

With [Private university] the candidate came to our school - she had worked at our school before. She came and she wanted to do fifth grade. She visited with our principal. Our principal checked with the fifth grade teachers first then sent her down since we were open to it. She watched each of our classrooms then she asked if I would be her mentor teacher. I said I would be her cooperating teacher. In another placement, last year, I had a student teacher from [second private university] from their STEP program. [Second private university] sends two or three of their people that work with the program to observe many different classrooms, usually recommended by the principal, teachers who qualify with experience and other things and who are open to it. Then they observe the classrooms and [second private university] actually choose which teachers they'd like to see candidates with. Then they go from there and see how it works out with placements like upper grade and primary. We have Spanish language in the primary so they work with that too - placing students in there. So then they tell us when they have placement if they happened to have a placement for us. So, it is very different [first private university name selection process and second private university name].

2. Why did you decide to have a student teacher?

I have been a BTSA coach for the past three years so I feel like I have some kind of an idea of what it's like. I think ... lots of reasons. It's nice to have an extra body in the room, there's no question about it. Although sometimes it's more work than you realize when you say yes. But, also, I just got my admin degree and I'd really rather like to do more coaching and I figure this experience is a way to get in with what it's like to work with new teachers. What it's like to try to share your experience with them. How you do things. Try to show them everything possible. Those are the main reasons.

3. How were you introduced to your student teacher?

She came in that first time to watch and we met. She said she'd like to be in this room and I said okay and we just went from there. Our principal knew she was here and said she was sending someone down. The university was not involved. I actually didn't see

anybody from the university until maybe mid-September. We start really early in August like August 11th or something. She came by the second week to observe then start in the classroom. I didn't see anyone from [private university] until mid to late September.

4. What information was provided to you, written or oral, to inform you what the university expected or student teacher required of you before, during, or after the practicum?

She, the candidate, gave me a packet of information that she had Xeroxed. Nobody contacted me from the university until they came here to observe her. I read through it and then I would hear from her whatever she told me. Actually there was a lot of misinformation and it wasn't until I finally spoke to the university that I got a little more detail, and even then there was still confusion. Mostly my communication was only with the student teacher not with anyone from the university until later on in the experience.

5. What responsibilities did you have for evaluation or grading of your student teacher?

She gave me a form at the beginning that I filled out - that was like a mid-way form. Then I had one that I was supposed to fill out at the end and I wrote her a recommendation. But, it turns out; once I spoke to someone I was supposed to be filling those out once a month instead of twice for the semester. The university gave me things to use based on the California State Standards for the Teaching profession and how I felt she was achieving those. I can't remember everything, but I think it was good, fair, and whatever order it goes in and reaching those different standards for the teaching profession. Then I know I had to write a few short answer questions on those forms. Researcher: Was there collaboration with the triad to agree on a grade? No. By the time ... I did a midterm one about early October for her and there some issues and I think I'd seen the supervisor once at that point or maybe not at all at that point. We talked and there were issues with her with how she was doing. Then her advisor came in again and again and she came in at least three times that I remember. It might have been more than that I just can't remember - you know how it goes! (Laugh). We talked, we'd kind of have a minute to talk in the back of the room but usually the advisor would watch the lesson and then they would go debrief the lesson after class. We don't always have a lot of free time before lunch so it didn't always work out that way - that I would get to talk to the advisor or even the three of us to talk together. I don't think the three of us ever had a three-way conversation. But the advisor and I talked a few times about the issues and what was going on with her. Things didn't really improve. The advisor got frustrated and I was pretty frustrated by the end. I was frustrated with the candidates teaching. I would tell her things like, you've got to this...like when you present to the class you have to do this when you're teaching.... like you need to get control of the room, present lessons with an intro. make sure you have whatever. Make sure you go over it. Things wouldn't really change. Her advisor would basically say the same thing, and I didn't always know that. We did get a chance to talk a couple of times. The advisor was frustrated at the end because she didn't see any changes. So here she is watching the candidate, who's supposed to be graduating in December, who really doesn't have control or can charge of

a classroom. Sometimes she would do pretty well, but it would be really hard. Since I had had no real contact, except for the couple of times with the advisor with the university, I didn't know how to turn to them and say something has to happen. So it really wasn't until the very end where she says we have to do something. I looked at the advisor and I was just like you need to tell me! And then I talked to more people and I don't even know what the outcome was, to be honest. I believe she graduated, but other than that I don't have if they talked to her or whatever. I know she didn't get a job because she is subbing in our district. That's all I know.

6. How did you and your student teacher set aside time for feedback and reflection?

We met Monday afternoons. We would go through the week - what was going on, what needed to happen. She was here all day pretty much every day. So Monday afternoon was our time and then she would also stay on Thursday when we did collaboration with my team, my fifth grade team, She would be in on all that planning when we had those meetings.

7. What contact did you have with university personnel during the student teaching practicum?

There were just the two contacts- her advisor and there was another type of advisor and that contact was a phone call and a couple of emails - that was it. When the advisor was saying something has to change, she's not really performing and demonstrating the standards, then she had the other supervisor contact me. She asked me a couple of questions, I answered them and that was all I heard. I think my university contact was through the [City name] campus, but not 100% positive. I think she went to classes at the satellite and I'm pretty sure that was in [City name].

8. What compensation did the university provide for your work as a cooperating teacher?

I got a \$250 stipend in my paycheck from [private university]. That's what they told me and that is what is marked on my paycheck. It came through my school district. [Private university] paid the school district and then it came to me in my paycheck. [Private university] sent the stipend to payroll.

9. What opportunities might be valuable for you to have in order to be better prepared as a cooperating teacher?

In this case it would have been nice to have gotten more information from [private university] in the beginning. She kept telling me there was going to be a meeting or something for cooperating teachers. I don't know if they ever had one. She told me, the candidate told me, that they never told her the date. Unfortunately by the end of the time with her I realized she didn't always tell me things. She got deadlines and things like that wrong and so information could have been given to her to pass on. I don't know if [private university] had that cooperating teacher night at all. They might have and I just

didn't get to know about it. I was surprised nobody from [private university] contacted me once she chose me. When I was a student teacher I certainly didn't choose where my placement was and obviously Stanford is very clear about they chose. They come out and choose you and then they sent the student teacher and I thought that's the way most things were. I don't know, I've only had two placements for me. So, I was surprised but I figured once I was chosen I would get an email or something from them and I never got anything. I don't know if it was because the communication was with the student teacher who dropped the ball a lot. So maybe she was supposed to give me information she never did. When I filled out her eval form I did get a form that had all my information on it. I'm assuming she turned it all in because at some point they knew because it also had the information about my stipend which they did tell me I was going to get. They never used that information to contact me either. At that point at least there could have been some contact back. So I was surprised that nobody had contact. What I got from her was just a Xeroxed packet of what was expected. With [second private university], they come in, they do a three-way meeting, they go over the expectations for me and they go the expectations for the student teacher. They have this whole binder. They have a cooperating teacher night and they do the whole thing - they calendar everything out. The meeting night is set up for other cooperating teachers. They go over the program and the expectations. Each professor goes over like the math and the literacy and kind of says this is the way we do things. They go over the philosophy and to kind of be prepared to come in and for how they might teach a lesson. These students have been taught to do a three series lesson on this in February and then they have to do this in March. So we are really prepared for what's coming up on their calendar. I understood that through [private university] the communication would come basically through the student teacher because that's all I ever pretty much got. So when that communication broke down there really wasn't a back up. There was no way, except for when the advisor came in ... I wasn't sure, I was kind of in the position where I'm trying to help this person grow as a teacher and see things ... and you know she's getting grades dependent on that, so it kind of like, okay, so you're always looking for, can you do better, improvement and things like that so I didn't want to come down like she totally doesn't understand. You don't know exactly how your role plays in this and how much your voice matters. I would be very clear - she's having trouble with this, you need to work on that, trying to see the positive but still let it be known that there is trouble. I know her advisors thought, we both thought, it was going to get better. She had to revideo tape one of her things - it just didn't work, there was no way she could use that. It didn't make her look good at all - it just wasn't good. It was a prepared lesson. There were lots of things like that. It was just hard. Then the expectation that she would teach for three weeks was a lot. I would be out of the room. Three weeks is the [private university] standard, it doesn't have to be three weeks in a row. Also the expectation that I would be out of the room which I find, just as an aside, I find it difficult because every class is different and there are some behaviors you have in the classroom...I'm still responsible no matter what happens or what the deal is. And I have a behavior that I have to watch him. And, that's just the way it is. So that was really uncomfortable for me and I didn't get a lot of clarification. So I would basically be out of the room, but then I'd be back in the room. I just kept moving back and forth because I wanted to give her that time because I really respect that - I understand, but I also felt that I can't let one student become an issue where he could distract or disturb so many other

students. That's no good for anybody.... or put them in harms way because that unfortunately, with this child, has happened. They're 5th grade. You have to be really aware of what's going on underneath. There's this going on - the stuff that's going on here [indicates surface] and things that are going on underneath. That's where it happens so fast and that's just experience to me. Some people pick up on that stuff right away, but I don't think she did. I just had trouble with that. [second private university] actually does not require the cooperating teacher to be out of the room. So that was my first experience of having to be out of the room. It's a lot to put on the student teacher as well.

I picked the three week take over consecutively - Thanksgiving week, the week of conferences, and a week when I had to do this testing. She actually did three weeks in a row, but they weren't full days and full weeks and nobody said anything about that. That was what I did because I felt that give her three weeks that she had to plan which she more or less did, but it just wasn't a full six and one-half hour day. Conferences are shortened days, things like that just so that I knew things were done. She didn't plan for an entire day. I was giving her lessons in the morning and have to check with her every day. Do you have something for the afternoon? She'd so oh no. So I'd say, here's something to do if you need something. So it was really hard. Even though we had the Monday afternoons and we went over it.... she knew the routines, it wasn't that...I didn't know how to turn to anyone or who to turn to. So, it wasn't until her supervisor came in during her solo week that she was just saying, "This isn't good. We can't let this go." I didn't know what to do and she didn't either!

10. In what ways did your experience transform your own teaching practices?

I can't say that this experience, this candidate from [private university], change it, but my other experience did. Just different styles of doing things and different, newer methodology - like teaching math and things like that. The student teacher came from her class and was "Wow, this is what we just learned - a way to teach the concept this way." Now I'm using that concept this year. That helps - that was good. I didn't see that as much with the student from [private university] - not at all really.

Researcher: Was that issue [enthusiasm to apply university methodologies] more about the student teacher or her preparation?

I would say, just because of what I know, it was probably more of who she was. She would never share much of what would happen in her classes. I never got a feel for what she was learning in her classes at all. So I don't know if she learned things - she might have had a gem - I just didn't see it or hear about it or anything. So I can't say!

Researcher: Did this experience transform your views of your preparation for a student teacher or what they need from you?

I thought to myself that I don't want that to ever happen again in the room. How would I make sure to avoid that? I thought I was very direct, but maybe I wasn't clear. You know you think you did it, but it could have been better. So, of course, I would be very direct about what my expectations are. Probably be more willing next time to just stop it. I would want to build a better relationship - not just with the teacher, but with the university too.

11. Is there anything about your experience that you would change or things you might do differently?

I guess I was just trying to give this person a chance and I really can't do that to the kids. It's both ways. It's like okay, how could I have improved my communication with her? Probably been even more direct than I thought I was. And really set the expectations. The other thing was to be more willing to stop it if gets to that point. I wouldn't have let it go. I did pop in here a lot to check in and give her lessons and make sure things were happening. Instead of her just planning it and me not knowing what was happening. It was even to the point where I would say please be here by a quarter to eight every day so we could go over the day everyday. I arrive at 7:00 so I thought that arriving at quarter to 8:00 was no problem. She still would show up like at 8:00 or 8:02 and school starts at 8:05. Now that was a direct comment so I felt like I was pretty direct. I would go over with her - this is the behavior we're looking for. I don't use a lot of behavior modifications for things that happen in the class. Pretty much I tell them this is what I expect and you just need to make it happen. We used a lot of different ones with her to help her deal with management of the kids. I don't know, it was just hard. I can't say that I would be willing to take anyone from [private university] again - I think I would want to know - have a more normal program - any program really like [second private university] they make it clear what they want and what they expect. They choose you so you - say okay. I think I would want to know that from another school - that I would have that relationship with the school because I don't think it really works if you don't. It doesn't have to be Stanford as a model. It just needs someone who shows up and says this is what we expect, let's go over it, because it just makes it easier for you to have a relationship - not just with the teacher, but with the university too.

12. Is there anything else?

Researcher: Something that has come up before and you mentioned earlier - your training as a BTSA coach. How much of that helped you in your training for working with your student teacher vs. any other training you might have had?

It helped in a lot of different ways. I'm pretty familiar now with the standards - the California Standards for the teaching profession because they base almost all of their evaluations on that stuff. That helped a lot because it seems like the student teacher evals I got, even from [second private university], are all based on that as well. So that helped a lot as far as what I know because then I can bring something to it - like what I'm looking for. Trying to have a relationship one on one with the teacher is good because the BTSA training that I've had has gone over a lot of different ways to coach and how to communicate. It's obviously a different relationship because they are a full time teacher and you're trying to help them get their paperwork done. They have the job, now they've just got to keep their credential kind of thing. It's a little different - your expectations probably for themselves and for what we expect as a coach ... but, I think in most ways, the relationship and the knowledge of the kinds of things you're looking for, what kinds of evidence you expect to see in lessons so that there's growth and improvement in the different areas. I think those things helped a lot bringing that from BTSA to the

cooperating teacher role.

Researcher: Without BTSA would you have had the skills to deal with the issues your student teacher was having?

I don't know. I think I probably would have thrown up my hands earlier. I kept thinking I can help - if we talk about this ... if I do this ... we'll get there. If I sit down and say okay this part went well, but we have to work on this, but I kept trying and if never got any better. I should just be able to have these conversations and make a change, but it just never seemed to quite work. I think her advisor experienced more frustrations. Her advisor would say you've got to change the way you're doing - and it didn't happen. Even the videotape that both of us were telling her she couldn't show that videotape. No lesson is perfect and you need to talk about the things that didn't go well, but that went so not well you can't show that. She said really, it's not that bad! I said, no, no really, when every student is talking and not paying attention, that's bad! Things like that would not happen if I was there. It never seemed to make a difference. I think a lot of this was personality, personally. She's subbing ... so maybe she could sub at a younger age. She's bilingual and good bilingual teachers are needed and so they're always looking. Like at this school we're always looking because it's really hard to find really good bilingual teachers. My principal watched her and said I don't think we can hire her here and I said I agree with you. The principal saw her teaching just coming in naturally - not an official observation that would scare her. Even with subbing ... I recommended her to the office, younger grades because I thought she might have more control of a classroom of younger students, perhaps 5th grade was a little tough for her age wise - that happens to people - but apparently even the office can't rely on her to be subbing because she's not called back. I do think there's a combination of factors here and not just the university - all of it - but it would have been nice to have more support. Her problems were both management and some curriculum - she had some issues with spelling and grammar and things she would have to work on if she was going to be in an upper grade classroom especially. Most of it was fine.

Researcher: How did the university classes impact or blend with the classroom instruction?

She went to class on Tuesday. It seemed totally separate. It didn't seem connected. She never brought anything back from class and said let's try it or we talked about this in class. She never brought anything back from class. I wasn't even aware of what she was taking. I know she was working on her PACT when she was with me because that takes a lot of time.

Researcher: What is PACT?

I don't know what the initial stand for anymore - it has to do with part of their.... like in BTSA they to a FACT - it's like a lesson series and you have to have the assessment and show the whole cycle - Plan, teach, apply, collect.... that cycle. I knew that was part of how you get your preliminary credential from California. As far as I know every student teacher has to do it - [second private university] has one coming up. My understanding of her class schedule was that she only went on Tuesday and every once in a while she said she had to finish something and I would say okay, go and take of what you need to do it's

not a big deal - that was not during her actual practicum but earlier in the year. It was just Tuesday so Wednesdays might have been something different but it wouldn't have been all week.

Researcher: When was she here?

It was fall. She came, we started early, I think she started her first week in here early, I think August 17th - so that week. She was not here the first week. We start pretty early so that was very odd. She was here until the end of December - around the 18th. At one point, since we are a modified year round, we had two weeks off in October and we went to Outdoor Ed for a week. She did not come with us that week - I didn't expect her to. That was an option, I told her if she wanted to go we'd work it out, but she didn't - I didn't blame her - what with her class schedules and things. She went to Outdoor Ed when she was a kid and don't think she really enjoyed the experience so I don't think she wanted to go - and that's all right. I don't think 5th grade was her thing.

Researcher: How does starting after school starts affect the student teaching experience? I think it doesn't give you a realistic look at what it takes to get for a classroom. I just don't think you know. I don't think you ever really know until you actually do it yourself. I remember I was there but I helped for a few hours then I'd run to class or whatever when I was student teaching. It doesn't give you any look into that, but the part that is probably just not the work, but how does the teacher decide to put the things where she decides to put them or what resources do you start the year off with - you're just not part of that decision making process. Then you have to go into the room cold the first time and you're not really sure why things are the way they are. Everybody wants to make it [their classroom] look cute, but it's not really about looking cute it's about being useful. So, how do you make it useful? You have to fill them in on what you did, but it's not the same as having a blank wall and having to go through that process.

Researcher: What about other things that come up in the fall - conferences, back-to-school ... is there an expectation that student teachers attend? [Private university] did not require it. I was more, can you come? We have meetings at the beginning of the year and she ended up translating at some of those meetings and then I asked her to be there for some of the conferences. I think that's important to see a couple of the conferences if you can. She ended up translating for my conferences that she could. But, basically, she stayed for the regular school day and that was about it. We ended school at 1:00, then she would stay until her normal hour then she left. So she translated for the beginning ones in the fall. I don't remember if that was required in the packet, I just went with what I felt. When she was late I didn't know what [private university]'s expectations were. I might have talked to [supervisor's name from private university] about that. She said she should be here when you're here. Well, I get here at 7:00 and I'm okay with her not getting here at 7, I'm just not okay with her getting here at 8:00 - especially when I've been clear about asking for that. It's hard to ... okay you're doing this part of the day and I'll do this part...and I know one of the expectations is the student teacher gradually starts to take over, but to me, you can't take over until you know what's happening. She would take over, but she never jumped in. There were hesitations. There was one lesson that I did jump in on - she was teaching a math lesson, She just went up there and started talking to

the desk. She didn't look up ... what's going on ... ? That was weeks in ... this was her second placement and apparently she did a summer school thing. So it was a small group of first graders that she was working with, it was not a whole classroom, was my understanding. But, it was not a full placement. So my class was her first experience with a full classroom. I thought her first grade was also in Spanish, which it should have been because she was working on her BCLAD so she could teach in a bilingual classroom.

Researcher: Anything else?

I think cooperating teaching is a good experience. I think it's good to share when you have that chance. I'm pretty open in the classroom, but like I said, I would have definitely hesitate with any other program at this point except [second private university] only because now it's my second time and they were very clear. I would want to know that a program was going to be that clear so that I could be clear. That's the one thing I really struggled with. Then to be clear.... like I know [second private university] checks up on me...so is there anything you wanted to tell us? That would be nice. That kind of opens the door for me because you're not really sure, you're just this person - in this case I was just a person that the candidate chose - so you not really sure how you got here. It would have been nice to be directly asked and to be checked in. Not necessarily a meeting, but I definitely need more information than a packet - a packet is too much. I read through it - I knew about the three weeks. I said to her, so you teach for three weeks and she said I think so! Well, that's what the packet says. I read it, but it's not the same as going through it with somebody. She was the only student teacher from [private university] and I don't 'know what their usual placement is - I think she wanted to be in [City name] and she wanted to be at [elementary school name] because right after college she had worked as a paraprofessional. She had been here on a temporary assignment for just a few weeks. She liked this school and she knew it had bilingual classrooms and obviously wanted to be here, but I didn't know how it worked out to that. [Private university] does not usually use [elementary school name] as a placement option - this was the first time since I've been here and I've been here for 10 years. In that time no one has been here from [private university] that I am aware of. We don't usually get student teachers here until just recently. We just started working with [second private university] last year - that was our first year of getting teachers from [second private university]. We haven't really had teachers from other places. Our school has been in PI [Program Improvement] for so long that we weren't really high on anybody's list until recently. We moved out of PI - two years ago, three years ago - so people start to look at how did you get of it. We got interest for that - that's when [second private university] came in. so, we've never even had [state university]. I know there are other schools around here, but they've never come here. We've never had anyone as a student teacher.

Researcher: Other? No

Interview ends

February 8, 2010

Heidi, first grade teacher

Signed consent form and agreed to be recorded

1. How were you selected to be a cooperating teacher?

For [private university], it was during summer school and our principal just approached me and asked me if I would be interested in having one. I knew our principal because she had been a teacher here and she knew me and maybe my style of teaching so she felt it would be okay for her to go with me - to suggest that. At [state university] the supervisor has given workshops here at our school for several years so we know each other through that and she's been in my classroom a lot. So the principal asked if I would do that and I said yes. The university contacts the principal and then she contacts the teacher and then it goes back. They [the university] might even contact the district first and then the district contacts the principal to see who they feel would want to have a student teacher. Then they ask us. The principal approaches people one-on-one and sometimes it is done informally and often later than before ... wires get crossed and lines of communication, schools start at different times ... so I think that's part of it - you find yourself with a student teacher which is okay.

2. Why did you decide to have a student teacher?

I feel that I'm experienced and I want to give back in service to the school. Also I see it as a learning experience for me because when the student teachers are going to their classes it's interesting for me to keep current on what they're being taught and what their ideas and approaches are. So I find it equally as beneficial - I learn and hopefully they learn too. It is interesting and a little bit of a challenge. I can do that (help a cooperating teacher)... I feel like it's something that I can do rather than maybe some things that I can't do. So I try to stay with what I can do - do what I can.

3. How were you introduced to your student teacher?

She introduced herself. She emailed me an introduction and then came, I think, on the first day of her assignment and we met. From [private university] it was the first day of our training - the program orientation - preparation and workday before school started. My student teacher came and introduced herself and helped me set up things and started right in. The email was first and the personal introduction came later. They sign in at the office and the office knows they are coming. My principal was very on top of knowing where she was and what responsibilities she was doing and making sure she was participating in yard duties and things like that.

Researcher: Is the principal different for summer school?

Yes, but I knew her as well.

4. What information was provided to you, written or oral, to inform you what the university expected or student teacher required of you before, during, or after the

practicum?

I think there was a packet that comes with the course curriculum. I know for [state university], the supervising teacher emails me with the same information that she does her students so we're all on the same page. [Private university] talked also with the supervisor when she'd come in and talk and observe the student teacher. We would talk and she would explain things too. The packet is brought by the student teacher on the first day. Then she showed things that she was doing and what the expectations were and what she would need to do.

5. What responsibilities did you have for evaluation or grading of your student teacher?

Checklists and rubrics - circling 1,2,3,4,5 somewhat of a grading system like that. It was mainly for formal evaluations, but then if we were doing a lesson we would plan it together and go through and check and make sure that she was doing the things that were expected and that she had the opportunity to do them.

Researcher: Did you and the supervisor meet in a triad situation for evaluation?
I was sending the rubrics and checklists to the supervisor and I don't think ... well, we had informal meetings when she would come to observe my student teacher we, all three of us, would be present talking about the lesson. She would get my feedback and [Student teacher name]'s feedback and hers too. Then she would have a time also with just the student teacher. Then she (the supervisor) and I would also have a time on our own where we talked about how things were going and what they expected or wanted and things they liked. The supervisor came to observe and talk maybe three times in a four-week period. I completed three checklists for her lessons and she was observed twice - I think. This is my first [private university] student teacher.

6. How did you and your student teacher set aside time for feedback and reflection?

After school - after the kids left then we would use that for planning time. We would prepare for the next day as well as prepare for the things she needs to do. We would generally plan every day. I would say every day - I didn't always fill out everything every day, but every day we would plan. I would say together with the whole class in mind - at least an hour every day.

Researcher: Do you have preps?

No, we don't have any preps - our prep time is after school - after the kids leave. If we had yard duty together then we would talk then because we were there together and we could talk about the children and what we saw and observations and how they were doing things, how they worked. We planned that after school time mutually. The school didn't say when we should plan, but in order to prepare we had to have time and that's what worked. If she could only come in the mornings or before school, we would have done it then, but after school seemed a natural time.

7. What contact did you have with university personnel during the student teaching practicum?

Not much really, I only met the observing supervisor and the student teacher.

8. What compensation did the university provide for your work as a cooperating teacher?

I think they might have given me a small amount - they usually give you something. It is monetary. It might have been maybe around \$100. I wouldn't say that for sure because I can't remember and it certainly wouldn't have been over that because it was also a short amount of time. The university pays the district and then the district pays me as part of my paycheck.

Researcher: Have you ever been offered any other type of compensation?

No.

9. What opportunities might be valuable for you to have in order to be better prepared as a cooperating teacher?

Well, maybe meeting or going to a meeting of a group and having things presented, possibly, in a class and getting good feedback on the goals of the university in general and getting to know the school [university] a little bit better. That might help me, however I appreciate not having to go to that as well. Having them feel that reading the material and meeting the student teacher is satisfactory enough for them as well. It might give me a space of time in order to plan and integrate things a little better or visualize how it might be rather than have it happening so quickly.

10. In what ways did your experience transform your own teaching practices?

Well I think it helps keep me more positive with the students. I try to, even when I don't have a student teacher, I try to see myself as others would be looking in and what would they be seeing. How might they interpret it? So it makes me more consciously aware of how I might be perceived to people who are learning to teach or observing the classroom. It helps me also meet all of the elements of the lesson when I'm getting more conscious of my own lesson planning. Even though I kind of do it anyway, I go through the same steps again. I like to read over the plans and kind of compare - am I doing this? Does it fit in here? Am I keeping abreast of what education is at the moment - what they are currently teaching in education? Am I current?

11. Is there anything about your experience that you would change or things you might do differently?

I'm pretty satisfied with the way it is. I haven't ... I don't find myself going oh, I wish it were this way or I wish I didn't have to do it this way. I'm either used to it so I'm accepting of it and haven't thought, oh, it could be better this way. It seems to be workable.

12. Is there anything else?

Researcher: Prior to the recording starting you were talking about some things I think would be beneficial to have on the record about the value of having a cooperating teacher. Could you address that?

Yes, I think what's really important before you go into teaching or think you want to go into teaching to spend a lot of time with children and really understand how children act in many situations and interact with each other. Either through camps or having babysat a lot because what I find is that people want to teach the lesson, but they don't realize that they're teaching children and there's sometimes a big gap between that and so first I think you have to like spending time with children because things never go the way you think they're going to go and it's either worse or better. So knowing that you like children is helpful so it can help you get your objective across sooner or later, but in a different way - one way or another - without giving up or being hard on yourself or being hard on them too.

Researcher: How do you view university expectations during student teaching?

It is frustrating when they need to run off to classes, because there is no time for them to plan after. The student teachers that I've had, our class gets out at 2:35, and they have a class at 3:00 or 3:30 but it takes commute time. I'm thinking, well when do they have time to plan here for their lessons the next day when they have to be at a class. That must be very hard for them. They have responsibilities in teaching. That is a problem! For some of my teachers they are going at least twice or may three times a week that I know of and it could have been more for others. For [private university] I think they did have classes, but she was close enough that we still had time enough to do it (plan), but if there's a commute and parking it's very stressful to them and I can remember other teachers saying, "Yes, I remember when I had this student teacher, it had to be from [city name] to here and I'd always be late and the professors would get upset with me because I'm late." Just commuting is very difficult.

Researcher: In relationship to university classes...how do you think they [student teachers] handle the workload?

I always think, how do they expect you to do all this because you have to plan your lessons here and of course they want the format and everything and then you have to papers and things there. It is very hard on them and very complex and not an enjoyable time. It is also kind of piece-meal so that often times things are kind of thrown together and so it's not really fair to them that they have to fit things in so quickly. You have to be in the school in order to really prepare the lessons - using the supplies or the room - you can't just do it at home at 3:00 in the morning! Plus, or course, they need their rest too because you have to be well rested in order to be a teacher and be happy all day.

Researcher: As the cooperating teacher, do you see the relationship between class work and their teaching practicum?

Often times. I do see them having needed a practicum in order to do a good lesson. Many times, also, they are wondering why is doing that because in my class they said this ... So,

my idea there is that in the class they try to give you as many ideas as possible and as many scenarios and many things, but sometimes you have to do it on your own, or try a different way, or do something else once you get into the real life. The class can't tell you everything that's going to happen. They can pick out as many selected things that they can, but it won't cover everything in every instance.

Researcher: If there is a disconnect, do you and the student talk about that?

Yes, I try not to make it a conflict because you have to know the school and where they come from and the whole big picture - I'm only getting a small part of that - so I wouldn't ever say well that's no true or that's not right because you need everything. If it happens a little bit different in the classroom then you can talk about why did it happen and what do you next or how would we change it or maybe it would have been better to do it that way. So, I try to give my rationale on why I would see it this way or why I would act on it this way. It might not be right - it is very possible - more times than once! I always say go ahead - you do that - try new things. Many things, when I see them, I go hey, that really worked, because many times I'm going, oh, I would never attempt that, but then I go, wow, that worked really well. You are a very brave person. So it is good. My experiences have been very good for the most part. I find the student teachers are very well prepared. I think they're getting good, very good, instruction. A lot of it is at the same time that they have to do student teaching maybe, which I think is very hard, even in intern programs, we've had teachers who have been interns and they were working all day and then they have tremendous course work that they have to do. I think you do need to do that - you do need to have those ideas and then see it in the classroom as well, but I don't know how to work it out less painfully. There is a lot of pressure on them.

Researcher: Have you ever been involved with BTSA?

No, I have not been in BTSA.

Researcher: Anything else?

Well, I think it is important to really have a good relationship and a good working relationship and be compatible. You don't have to be the same personalities, but you have to be open. Teaching is a collaborative career, and a cooperative career rather than a solitary, single one. We all need to work together so it needs to be a person who likes to work with people on many levels. I know of relationships that have not worked but I'm not sure why. They were removed from the classroom. I have also heard of others, teachers, being perfectionists and expecting too much or not doing lesson plans and things which you really do need to have a plan and know how to prepare it and present it because it all has to fit in together somewhere along the line. You have to have a rationale. We are accountable.

Researcher: Are there extra things your student teacher is accountable for?

No, mainly because they have to get to their class or they have to get their assignments. Most of the time my student teachers - 4:00 is their closing time - a few have stayed later a few times, but mostly I think it's because they had classes or things they had to do in relationship to those classes. They had a shorter than normal teaching day - for what a normal teacher's teaching day is - like us - we're still here! Maybe not for every

cooperating teacher either - maybe they don't all work long days either!

Researcher: How well are student teachers prepared for extra things like conferences if they don't stay?

The thing about having them at conferences is that I don't always feel comfortable because I want the parents to be really open with me and so I'm afraid with a student teacher that's one more person that they might be not as open with sometimes, they're more open with. Also a student teacher really doesn't have the same relationship with the parent because I'm responsible and I'm going to be responsible all year. I really need to have this relationship going like I see it as a really personal type. I have had student teachers sit in on certain conferences just to get an idea, but I've asked the parents before if that would be okay. But, she had also been in the classroom for quite a while. As far - as classroom set up I did have a student teacher come for that at summer school - she was very helpful. I have not had a regular student teacher come in to help with set up. They usually come in a week or two later. So they do not get that experience.

Anything else....

No, interview ends

February 9, 2010

Irene, fourth - fifth combination teacher

Signed consent form and agreed to be recorded

1. How were you selected to be a cooperating teacher?

Basically it was different each time. Sometimes there was something put out there saying, anybody interested in a student teacher? Please see me - usually from the principal. Sometimes the principal called me particularly and said, "Are you interested in having a student teacher?" It followed from there. A couple of times after having a student teacher I believe it was from [second private university], they sent me a form and said they were so happy that you were a helper/master teacher and would you please like to do it again. I signed this form and sent it in. They responded that no one had ever responded so quickly before and then I never heard from them again. And I never had another student teacher from there again.

2. Why did you decide to have a student teacher?

The really selfish reason why is that I thought it was an opportunity to have another adult in the room who could help with the kids who are slow learners - special needs kids. I thought it was an opportunity to give back and help somebody new and offer some wisdom. I didn't have that much experience with elementary when I first started and I had a student teacher - probably five years or a little over that. All of them were really rewarding experiences.

3. How were you introduced to your student teacher?

The last one, which may have come from a special program at [private university], she came to the school, both her and her supervisor made arrangements ahead of time with me by emailing me for a while. Then they came down here and we introduced each other and kind of laid out what the expectations were on her end for her school and what my expectations were in the classroom - what was needed. The other time, I guess the same thing (happened). I was probably - this was before email time even - I was sent the name and the person showed up at school and then we set a time and we met.

Researcher: Do you know how your name came up with this most recent placement? I have no idea. Someone may have given them my name, but I'm not aware of that.

4. What information was provided to you, written or oral, to inform you what the university expected or student teacher required of you before, during, or after the practicum?

In this most recent, which is probably the one from [private university], which is maybe where you got my name from, I was actually given a CD and a whole folder describing the program. As well as supervisor coming down and telling me how the program worked - how it was different than most student teacher programs. That was the only one that I ever had a lot of written information about the student teacher ahead of time - what her background was and what her goals were.

5. What responsibilities did you have for evaluation or grading of your student teacher?

Well, I needed to do observations and give her feedback on that. The ones in the past who were traditional like from [state university], it was basically the same thing - do observations and give her feedback. Talk about it and as time progressed, give them independence as far as planning lessons and teaching lessons and also lead ultimately into the one-week solo where I never went into the room. With this last one because it didn't quite make it that far I did observations. She did plan lessons and I observed her and gave her feedback, but she only stayed for probably one-fourth of the time. So I didn't end up having to do a formal evaluation. I don't recall ever having to do a real formal evaluation - maybe a three-way meeting between the college advisor and the student and myself. But, nothing, I don't recall ever doing a formal evaluation. The final grade, I assume, comes from the college supervisor with the input that I give them. Like I said, every student teacher that I've had has been a positive experience, They have all gone onto successful jobs with the exception of this last one. This last one didn't get to the point where we said; "You need to have more work before you're ready." She had another opportunity arise in the middle of it and she left the program and didn't make it. She didn't leave because she wasn't doing well. I think she really thought she could do it and actually I thought she may have really excelled with older kids. Working with the younger ones was really not her forte.

6. How did you and your student teacher set aside time for feedback and reflection?

Usually on my prep time or after school or before school. Prep times are arranged so that students have three out-of-class prep classes during the week. So during the week they have 50 minutes of PE, 50 minutes of music, and at the time 50 minutes of library class. So it would usually be 1-50 minute period three times a week, So, in those times we would talk about what her responsibilities would be as far as planning lessons or teaching a lesson, her plans, or how she was feeling or whatever was needed - we set aside time to deal with that - either before or after school. But, the majority of the planning was during the prep time.

7. What contact did you have with university personnel during the student teaching practicum?

I don't recall having any contact with anyone other than the supervisor. This last placement I didn't see the supervisor very often. This last one was maybe once ... no, that's not true! He came by for a shared observation as well. He got in there and rolled his sleeves up. He got in there with the kids during the lesson. So, the initial meeting and maybe once or twice during the time she was here. Other supervising teachers, they came for observations but not ... oh, something just occurred to me about [private university] ... I do have a student here that is our garden teacher who was also a student teacher of mine. We've been colleagues, but I was her master teacher last year ... that's very possibly it! That just suddenly occurred to me because I'm not used to thinking of her in that role. She was our garden/nutrition teacher - it's a special grant program that we have here and she was in that position prior to student teaching and still is. They are on a grant program - they all have 4-year degrees in all different subjects, but they had the opportunity to go for their credential that would qualify them to be regular classroom teachers. It was a special program that they did and I do think that was through [private university]. So she was doing that last year and her supervisor came down several times to do observations of her lessons. There wasn't any feedback with me. She came into the classroom and she observed and she gave feedback directly to the student teacher.

8. What compensation did the university provide for your work as a cooperating teacher?

I can't tell you for sure, but my memory does not recall any compensation. I didn't ask for class reimbursement or course tuition reduction - I wasn't going for any classes and they didn't offer any - that much I know. I don't believe I was ever given any compensation, I didn't expect any.

9. What opportunities might be valuable for you to have in order to be better prepared as a cooperating teacher?

I don't know - that's a hard one for me to answer. My standard answer to almost every question with regard to teaching is, time - an opportunity to have a little more time to prepare things or time for ... because my time, my prep time, is extremely valuable to me

for my own prep time - even though you have a student teacher who is sharing your load, it's not really completely sharing your load. I would say an opportunity for a little extra time out of the classroom - for preparing with her so I could have my own prep time to prepare for my own professional needs. I don't know, that's a really tricky one for me to answer.

10. In what ways did your experience transform your own teaching practices?

Oh, that's a good one! It helped me be much more aware of my practices because I'm modeling for somebody else and I also have to be careful about "do what I say not what I do" because I ..., you didn't really get a chance to see my classroom, but it really helped me to focus on organizational skills. It helped me focus on my weaknesses and try to strengthen them because I'm modeling for somebody else.

11. Is there anything about your experience that you would change or things you might do differently?

I don't think so ... perhaps a little more communication ahead of time - most of the communication was from the student teacher back to me. She basically communicated or told me everything - what she needed to do, when she needed to do it, what projects she needed to focus on for her lesson planning in regards to her class work as I wasn't in touch with the university. Do I think that would have been better off to hear it from the university...? Not necessarily. Maybe I would have enjoyed being part of the evaluation process that the other professors had with the student teacher, but again, I can understand that kind of confidentiality. Especially if it didn't go well, but I've never really had a student teacher that had problems. They've all been wonderful - I've been very fortunate in that way. I have colleagues that have had the opposite experience.

12. Is there anything else?

Another thing that I've done, which is not really about have a student teacher or being a master teacher, but I've done BTSA for many years and I have very mixed feeling about it - more negative than positive, but it's changed over the years so I'm feeling much more positive about it. The thing about BTSA, which is a lot like being a master teacher, is that over the years there was a lot of redundancy and things that I thought students should have already gotten in their student teaching process now that they were turning professional. But, what they didn't have is the nuts and bolts of everyday teaching. How to deal with irate parents, or what to do with a kid who pushes all your buttons, or how to prepare for a field trip or how to fill out the different forms and paperwork things, - all of the practical, everyday things you need to know to be a teacher, that weren't part of the program are all of the things I did for BTSA. I have life long relationships - a strong friendship/relationship with every teacher that I've ever been a BTSA support provider for. We have maintained our friendship long past the time that I was a support provider and that's what they say they appreciated the most. It wasn't all the little guidelines that they had to do for the program...yes, that's important, but the thing that they appreciated most was just having somebody to come and talk to and they were happy if they got

practical experience - ideas on how to deal with some of those real issues of the day that teachers deal with.

Researcher: Are you saying you felt student teachers had a lack of preparation in the nuts and bolts of teaching?

Yes, I'm kind of saying that. Some of that is school specific or district specific as far as procedures are done, so I'm not so sure in a college environment they could give you those kinds of details, but yah, maybe that other real life things, dealing with that irate parent and that really special kid - it's not just kids talking any more and learning tricks or how to get them to be quiet, it's learning how to keep yourself safe and not at your wit's end. So, yah, I'd say there's a little more preparation that needs to be done in that area. That seems to be the most valuable thing I have to offer a student teacher.

Researcher: Do you think BTSA provides some evaluation and peer coaching training that you need as a master teacher? That without BTSA there might have been more holes in what you might have needed as a cooperating teacher?

Yes, that is possible, but again, a lot of what was done officially through BTSA ... BTSA used to be very, very confidential, just between the teacher and the mentor and you couldn't share anything with the principal and that is still true, but there wasn't a lot you had to be accountable for. Quite honestly, you could skip a lot of the tasks and kind of just fill in the blanks at the end and if I ever felt that a teacher needed to be doing all the little tasks after I would have been doing that, but most of them that I've worked with knew all that and just gotten that and were very frustrated. I don't have time for this ... it's my first year of teaching and I already did all of this in my student teacher programs and as BTSA went along they were excellent. They listened to us and tweaked it so that there is much less paper shuffling and it is much more streamlined and it's much more accountable. It is much more authentic for each teacher choosing their own area of study and focus ... I think I got off track on the question ... but this relationship is important. As BTSA has changed and evolved over the years, like I said in the very beginning, it was a little bit of a joke, it was like here's what they want us do it and here's what we're going to do. Over the years when it was all said and done at the end of the year we had evaluations and we would be honest too and say here's what I was supposed to do and this is what I really did. Each year they've made serious changes for improving it and making it more valid. So, yes I would say my BTSA work has been very helpful with my work as a cooperating teacher.

Researcher: How do course work and its demands at the university tie in with the reality of the practicum?

I think, probably there are distracting demands, but their course was to plan a lesson, to plan a math lesson let's say, and so, they were planning that math lesson that they were going to teach in my class and that they were also going to be turning in for their course work. So, I think it would be ridiculous to say that their course work didn't add to their stress level and their time factoring, but that's a difficult thing to do. There was definitely a cross over. You could see in your classroom what was being taught at the university. There was a bridge. And it was also the other way around. I could sometimes say what are you working on in class. They would say they were working on this and we could

work that into our curriculum most of the time - work that into a theme or something that we were working on. Overall, the students are well prepared and my experiences were positive. I don't find much difference between what different schools require either – [state and private university names] - my recollection is that they were very similar in what their requirements were and what they (student teachers) had to do. Teacher preparation programs were preparing student teachers in similar ways.

Researcher: Anything else?

I went through the SOS program - that stands for Students out of Sync. I had been teaching in the Child Development program for "X" number of years and finally went back to get my credential. My position was not a credential but a classified position. I had an Early Childhood certificate and when I went in to get my degree in the credential program I had to find my own position within the district where I was working. So I had to go around to schools where somebody was sick and taking a quarter off or find somebody who had just left a position. I had to find my own job. I had to teach fulltime, plus I was the only teacher there (in that room). I didn't really have support ... and I had to go to classes every night and teach class every day and plan my lessons then. I did have a supervisor who just came down to observe me within a quarter. I suppose I could have gone to them because they did have office hours, but I didn't have time to go run up there. They clearly didn't think I would have time. The first night, I'll never forget, they said, "Don't get married, don't have any babies, tell your families to stay healthy and no one can die because you won't have time for a funeral!" And, they were right! I look back on that and think how did I do that? Every first year teacher goes nuts with the work. I was a first year teacher and a student at the same time and I can honestly say I don't know how I did it! Researcher: Is that similar to interns now? Yes! We had interns here in the past few years, but not any more. They are fulltime with a supervisor from the program.

Anything else you want to add...

Not really - I think we covered it!

Interview ends

Afterward, the tape was running and this came up... the supervisors are often retired - you get a lot of that. I question it because some of them are people, like myself, who have been around too long and it's time to walk out. Then they go up and train new teachers, yet they haven't come along with the times. They're still saying, "Have they given you a record player?" (laugh). They have been out of the classrooms for a long time.

I am aware of the TPAs through BTSA. I am not so much aware or haven't been informed from the university for student teachers, but I know what the requirements are for BTSA and there's a lot of technology-based teaching and other components that they have to do. When I first started BTSA they were required to do a full-on technology lesson when we didn't have the means for them to do that. But, if student teachers had requirements to write TPAs they would get help from their supervisors.

February 10, 2010

Judy, 3rd grade

Signed consent form and agreed to be recorded

1. How were you selected to be a cooperating teacher?

This year it's because the person I work with, this is her third year of working with me, by the end of her ... she came to me second semester three years ago - two school years ago second semester- so would be almost her third year, so it would be three and a half years, she decided, like many of the young people that I have worked with here as well as elsewhere, they get a feel for it and decide this is what they want to do. They've already finished school, or they're finishing school, or they're going back to school or however that works. So, if they had a choice she chose me, which is nice. She was given the okay from our principal because prior to that - the year she first started - I had trained two student teachers, one in the fall semester and one in the spring semester - one from [private university] and one from [a second private university]. Of which both requested me to be their master teacher. The principal approves it, but does not initiate it. In the past I've had a student teacher that they placed. At some point, we're talking a long time ago, [private university] said there's this Catholic school or that Catholic school - you can probably go there or you can probably go there and that's how I got a student teacher. I did not even know the person and I got a student teacher. So, it's worked both ways - either they know me or they don't know me and some are still teaching which is good?

2. Why did you decide to have a student teacher?

I laughing say things like this so I probably don't want to say this ... but, I like to be very controlling!!! No, I think, for a lot of reasons. Probably the number one reason would be, even though I've been in this profession a really long time, I would like to help people enjoy it as much as I have and understand the importance and look at the nuances of how each child is, celebrate them as well as correct them. I want people who teach today to be like I was when I first started out. Have it be a vocation as opposed to a career. I don't know if that makes sense. I don't want to make it sound like, it's all about me, but whoever is going to be a teacher really needs to understand the nuances of how a child develops, celebrate the positive parts, know what it is you need to correct and move on. Because I think what is happening to day in education is that we are looking for the final product that is the grades - high test scores. There are so many ways you can turn off learning in that process so there is a balance. So, if I can help for the future when I retire or before I retire, if I can make a little bit more of a difference than probably I have then ... it's just another way of teaching. Another way of sharing a passion that I've had since I was ten. I've been lucky!

3. How were you introduced to your student teacher?

The ones that I didn't know, it would be just like I was introduced to you. The ones I did know, one of my former students (he's one of my boyfriends - don't tell my husband - he's a senior in high school!), had a sister in college and she came to observe. I didn't teach

his sister, this was somebody from here. She came and observed and I thought, oh, holy cow, she's going to go away and thing yuck, because there is so much that goes on during the day that's just blah - like management, instruction, acceptance - a lot of things that you can sit and think that it might have been a good day or a bad day or whatever it was. She had to do a little write-up for a class. It might have been when she was in high school, but she waited until she graduated from college, then she turned around and said, "Can I come back into your room and student teach?" I said, "Wow, sure!" She was with [private university] and so is the person that is in my classroom right now. I did not know the person in my room now - she was hired to take the place of my assistant that had to go, who was also training to be a teacher from [elementary school name]. She had to leave and go to another state so she was working here and then had to leave and we needed somebody to come in and do the actual assistant job and the yard-duty. They do assistant and yard duty - the perfect combination, I'm sure! Although everybody hates yard duty, but I think yard duty is important because you find out a lot about kids when you go outside and see what they're up to. So that was two - two and one-half years ago. The person came here to meet me and thought, maybe I'll work with kids. She had several opportunities to do other things. She's not that old, I mean, she's 26. So, then she decided maybe this is what I want to do. Once again, it's another validation that somebody else is saying what a great job this is and wanting to pursue this as a career. And really, it's sort of self-serving on my part and selfish, because I get to see through my older eyes what it's like for young people to experience this. So I did and it's a validation and it's a sort of like a facelift - I don't know it that makes sense - it energizes you for a lot of different reasons. It's the same thing that you get in your classroom, but different because you are talking to someone who can maintain good self-control and their handwriting looks pretty good, and they know their math facts! (laugh) It's a different training system. Another reason why I did it is I think I have a lot of knowledge to give. When I first started teaching, I taught in my old kindergarten classroom, I taught first grade in a low-income, 50-70% turnover, overflow school in a public school. In your Stull Bill you had to make two months growth for every month of instruction. I always thought, oh my God, if I don't do that what are they going to do ... arrest me!? So for five years I had, probably, one of the best experiences that I've ever had. Going through it wasn't easy because of the types of kids and the situations - you see a lot, you're talking to CPS (Child Protective Service) and you're getting threatened to be shot by parents, and all sorts of things go on and you just think - ahh, wow. But, then you have those moments that are just awesome - you think this has made my whole year. Doesn't matter if you have 30 minutes and it makes 180 days. I also worked for a very good school district, a very small school district, In fact, the only school district in the state of California that has consistently passed their school bond every time they've put one up for election. So, not only are they not poor, they're building schools and they're community is growing. There's a lot to be said for that kind of environment. They also spent, my second year of teaching - because they really watch you like a hawk your first three years and then they either let you be a teacher or they don't let you be a teacher. It is also the first school district in the state of California that fired the first tenured teacher. So, there are a lot of things that were truly on the ball at this place. They develop, you may or may not have heard about this there, somewhere in the late seventies/eighties, the state of California or the government funded 10 spots throughout the state of California ... fortunately they

were mostly in my hometown which is [city name], CA, down south, for 10 professional development training centers for teachers - meaning communities. So they hand picked new teachers, middle of the road teachers, and about to retire teachers where they ran through a rigorous program. You taught for three days and went to school for two days and the following week you would have somebody come in and see if you were practicing what you had been taught. A lot of it was Madeline Hunter, it was Lee Canter - assertive discipline, for lectures, they took us down to the training school at UCLA - we heard Madeline Hunter there - the power of positive thinking. They did a lot and I learned a lot. What I learned then, that I think is still applicable today, and that is another reason you want to spread that because a lot of the think they are teaching in college now are not as practical as they should be, but that was the same case when I went to school. You had the one professor that said the only way you're going to get kids to straighten up is to do behavior modification. Well, you get one year into teaching and you know that pretty much all of that stuff is BS! So, that's why this program that I got to experience was really beneficial because it was what it should be. If you think about it, when people are learning how to teach you learn all the basics then you get thrown under the bus your first year of teaching. Nobody is there to watch you except for maybe somebody that hasn't been in a classroom for maybe 15-20 years to tell you whether you're doing a good job or not. You don't really have support. Your colleagues, teaching is also very competitive, where somebody else is always thinking, "Oh, I can do that better than you!" They don't say that - it's more inference. People don't understand that either. I think teaching is one of the most competitive businesses I've ever been in. People go, "I don't see it." I say well, let me give you some examples and so all that experience ... I think I have a lot to offer, At one point, I've often said I should a grant writing and just get some teachers that I know who have been doing this for a really long time and one of the classes they have in college before they walk out of college is students go to these master teachers in a panel form, or whatever, and they have a 40 minute or hour long discussion every other week or something. You meet and discuss - what are all of your problems, what do you perceive, what do you need? Then you get 5-10 minutes of honest answers because you (the expert panel) are still doing that job.

4. What information was provided to you, written or oral, to inform you what the university expected or student teacher required of you before, during, or after the practicum?

I have a whole packet and I've read it. I have it but ask me to find it right now - I could do it, but ... not quickly! I know kind of where it is. The student teacher gives it to you - I didn't get it in the mail - it was handed to me. Then I do have review things that I have to fill out. The forms have always been given to me by the student teacher. The student teacher packet I just can't remember ... I know I have them, I know I received them, it was handed to me by both the last two both from [private university] and [second private university]. The expectation is that I read them myself at my leisure to know what my responsibilities are and what I'm supposed to do. I think the basic thing is that when you have a student teacher you have to let go - not an easy thing to do. But, that's what you do! I think that's the big message if you ever have a student teacher you have to let them have the opportunity to be successful as well as fail - just like you do your students.

When I have to step back, after 34 years of teaching, I (gasp) - it's like anything - it's like your own child! You know that - when you send them out the door it's not like you're still not going to worry about them, but you're still, being an intelligent person of sound mind, you know that is the best thing you can possibly do for them - no matter how painful it is. That being said, it's not exactly the same thing with a student teacher, but the number one message is - let them go - let them do it, let them try it and figure it out. I'm still training her because she has a really great project that she's working on for her Master's thesis. All, I'll do is - I won't stop and say, "Hey!" - I'll say you know what it's good that you're letting them talk as much as you want - don't worry about the talking because the talking is the learning and when you rein them in, this is what you need to do. Because you'll see that the very second you do it, they're going to stop what they're doing and they're going to settle. Third grade is notoriously loud. There's no quiet! Some day I go home like this (hands on ears!) and my husband always says why are you always on the couch?! It's this job - it's exhausting! Developmentally - it's always in the back of my head and it's the only thing that keeps me sane - if you consider me sane - is that developmentally you know it's 1,3,5, 7, 9 and in third grade they're are developing their gray areas. First grade they develop their sense of space. Third grade they develop their gray areas, meaning, they have a real strong sense of the truth, but they don't understand that their truth isn't everybody's truth! So that's what you've got to develop. That's why I do a lot of cooperative lessons and projects and that sort of thing.

5. What responsibilities did you have for evaluation or grading of your student teacher?

I had to fill out forms, which is easy. I write things up. I can write well because of all that training I had 150 years ago!! That really teaches you how to write things up and sound half-way decent. Also, her supervisor, in fact all of the supervisors I've had in the last few years have been really great, so our verbal discussion has been fun and interesting and easy. I don't think of it as being hard. I don't think of it as a lot of work. They are graded a triplicate or quadruplicate, you know the forms with all the layers - the top layer was the first on then second quarter was next, by the time you got to the last one all you can think of is Holy Cow ... if I mess up on this one I've got to start all over and rip them all up!!! That [the student teacher evaluations] is kind of like what it is. I've seen it, but I don't read them. But, she, the supervisor that comes in, does review them with me and she has a checklist and she talks and it's all set up. It's like a report card with a lot of writing and spots to put grades. They get graded on what they read. There are no tests to do percentages, there's no extra credit when you're learning how to teach. So, they have, it's like a report card, they write on it and rip it off and you sign it or I sign it. I don't remember signing it, but I probably did, but probably didn't have to. I had something else that I had to send in and that was just one sheet and I had to do four of them. So, we had to fill them out over the next couple of weeks, but the supervisor had the real report card.

Researcher: Did you ever collaborate with the three of you?

No, you really have to coordinate that due to the time of that I have or she can. The funny part of it, because she does all the yard duty - it is important and even though she hates it and I totally understand it - we would have to really coordinate it where it would be good.

When it was her week I had to do everything she did - so if she had yard duty with the Junior High, there I was looking at my former students looking Jr. Highish - Lord have mercy!! I got into a lot of trouble for that too ... because I just couldn't believe it. Oh, my gosh, no wonder why I don't teach you. I totally adore you, I like you - I so would not want to walk into a classroom with you. You know how Jr. High is - I don't care if it's fair, I'm just telling you the truth. So all of that had to be dealt with - I was okay with it. Some teachers couldn't believe it - "you have that much yard duty - that's horrible - I would protest!" But, I start laughing - what are you going to do?

6. How did you and your student teacher set aside time for feedback and reflection?

We have times that the kids aren't in the room. There are certain times, like when you and I are talking, we would talk during that time, which is 2:00. We would discuss it. Sometimes she would come in at 7:30 am - I get here really early in the morning so by the time she would be here, if we had some things we need to talk about, we'd talk about it. Sometimes during the day when the kids are in there - no it's easy - I have a busy class this year. Not that it hasn't been busy in the past ...

Researcher: What are her hours in relationship to yours?

She gets here at 7:30 and she can leave at 3:30. She is mostly the entire time. She is exceptionally conscientious, really, to the point where it's okay, you can go, fine, I'm a big girl! Hopefully, I don't look like I'm going to lose it, but ... it's fine. I think those are her hours because she is here being paid as an assistant and that has to be coordinated too - assistant, yard duty supervisor - that's part of the school's job detail. She has to ask permission to leave early enough in order to go to her 4:00 o'clock classes. I think I'm pretty easy on her time, at least I think I am, I'm probably really high maintenance though!!

7. What contact did you have with university personnel during the student teaching practicum?

Just with the supervisor. It was fairly frequently. She had, I'm trying to think, two consecutive weeks and one whole week and some lessons, so during the time I saw her frequently and I really liked her. I have liked all of the women that have come in to watch. They get to see what goes on and it's nice. I feel comfortable that if there was an issue or a problem with a student teacher they would be there. I've been really, really lucky. If they've had a problem I know how to talk about it in a professional manner as well as giving accolades where they need to be given too. There's not much problems ... there haven't been any problems whatsoever. I don't mind because sometimes they come in while I'm still in the middle if they're just coming to see one lesson and it's not a full week, they'll see me teach. A lot of people don't like that, but due to that class I had 150 years ago, I had people in and out of my room watching what I was doing all the time. Well, I'm used to that if people know what they're looking for. Because you can have people come in and observe you and not know what the heck is going on and you can really tell. It's nice for the student teachers that I have had where the supervisors been able to come in and tell what's going on - and that is a plus. The ladies I've worked with

have been really lucky.

8. What compensation did the university provide for your work as a cooperating teacher?

No, but I guess when I had (name) who is now a teacher at another school, when she worked in my room, they apparently mailed a check to the Mrs. T, my principal. Then later on all of the sudden I got money and she said this is really for you ... oh, okay! So I don't know what it was really. I don't know about course reimbursement or tuition reduction- that doesn't interest me - I have a hard time sitting still and taking classes. I doubt if I would go to [private university]. Not because I don't think it's a good school, it's just other venues that offer up interesting classes that I can take here I drive down to San Jose and stay in a hotel room - like Marcy Cook or somebody like that. I just one "How to Encourage the Indifferent Learner" - hmmm, that would be a good one, but I'm not going to in on a Saturday. I've seen a lot of them and I've taken a lot of classes. It was held at [private university] - sure, if they wanted me to go to [private university] - sure. Unless I'm going to further my education beyond what I already have, I don't think I would look to a university. It's just a practical sort of thing. You're going to school and obviously you love it, but it's not my thing! It doesn't mean I put my head in the sand and won't seek out learning opportunities. I do that.

9. What opportunities might be valuable for you to have in order to be better prepared as a cooperating teacher?

I don't know if I would need, it's not a sense of arrogance, I'm never too old to learn, but I think this is an okay process. I think, if anything, it would great to have them come in before school starts where they maybe have everybody meet at [private university]. Now, that's when I would go - to iron out some kinks, like what your expectations are. Sometimes, as you well know, when you start the school year, you hit the floor running and sometimes those little nuances that you'd like to be able to explain to people just don't get explained if you haven't met them (your student teacher) before. For instance, one of the things when I taught first grade was talking about the importance of a good management system. For some parents, that would be something I would go over. I would say I am going to explain to you why it is important to enter this room and walk clockwise. I want to make sure they understand that when you do your centers and you do your stations and you do your language arts group that you have a plan and they know how to move because if they don't you're wasting 15-20 minutes every single day. You need to practice that - it's called massing the practice. You mass the practice with a lot of different areas - the big one is movement because if they're going to be using this they need to know how to do this all year long. So those kinds things you could do if you had a little extra time, but you usually don't so ... It's not because of school, it's because of the place you work. It's a busy profession.

10. In what ways did your experience transform your own teaching practices?
It makes me less cynical. It keeps that out of the equation. I'm more positive. It's not that I would ever ... I have caustic wit and lots of sarcasm while laughing all the time, but it

keeps that to where I still have the ability not to pinpoint the wrong. As I said earlier, what you want to focus on is the positive. When you see what kids are able to do under fresh light - although you're still seeing them too - you have somebody else appreciate them and what you do, it makes it easier. That's what helps me because I don't want to ever be that teacher that is blah or indifferent ... and we all know who they are!

11. Is there anything about your experience that you would change or things you might do differently?

I like the process. I like people who will question me - why did you do that/? Ironically enough I've had other assistants that go away. They don't choose me to be their supervising teacher, which is fine because they're in Marin or wherever they are. They will email me later on and say gosh, now I see why you did that. So smart, not meaning that I was smart, but that the technique I learned is a smart technique. Another reason it is important for me to still be with people that are learning how to teach is that at the age of technology there's an impersonalization, I don't think that's the word, but the experience becomes very impersonal - teaching has ... because you get those people who only have to do is your support, you don't have to engage, there's no problem solving, there's no movement, there's no interactivity, but we have technology! And, that's offensive to a lot of people my age and younger. I mean, technology, is impressive because it's not something we grew up with. But, when I see it and I see that everybody is clamoring on to doing technology and there's a place for it. As it gets more and more entrenched into our educational system who is going to make the human factor? Whose going to make it important that you still need the small group? That you still provide a community within the classroom until a certain age. That you still use a certain style - that you still get close, that you bend down, that you talk to kids about your life - there are all of those things and you have all those expectations for different things and you have expectations for good manners so all of those things aren't lost. Believe it or not, no matter how much money people have to send their kids to a private school, they still don't teach respect and they still don't teach them manners - some not all. So, all of those things, when I talk about training people because I'm going to be retiring and I want people to have teachers like I had teachers. She's going to take my place, so you see what I'm saying, we're passing it on. It's not all about technology. How low do you go with it? When are kids ready? I figure they're ready when they can copy their homework off the board and be responsible for it. Instead of checking every night on the computer or having their mom does it.

12. Is there anything else?

I would do it again in a heartbeat. Oh, yah, I really would do it again. I don't know if they'd ever chose me - I don't know if that's ever going to happen somewhere along the line, but I just love it. We just had a conference about technology on Friday and a local high school. One of my former students, I haven't seen in a long time, probably since high school, is now teaching at her high school that she went to. I remember seeing her. She just came up to me and said, "I don't know if you remember me?" and I said, "Yes, how is your evil twin?" There were two of them that were like this (fingers crossed) and they were never apart. We had that whole experience of wouldn't that be great. That

would be my hope and wish to bring somebody I taught into the profession. That may or may not happen. I actually had that experience myself. When I was in high school, you had to have permission to go off campus and I lived five minutes from my high school, it was a small town. I went into the classroom of one of my most influential instructors, who was my second grade teacher. I got to train with her and I also got to work with her when I got my own classroom. That was a really nice thing to be able to have.

Researcher: What do parochial schools require in terms of credentials?

[Credential requirements are the] same as public schools. I think in days long ago parochial schools anybody with two years of college could teach. I have a life credential, Kindergarten – ninth grade. from 1976 so I can teach in a public or private school. The current requirements for credentials now seem more political and more intense. I could not pass these new test and the new requirements for "highly qualified" teachers. How are they going to judge? How are going to put a label? We test too much. We're stressing teachers out. Kids are not learning like they used to. They're just not! We talk about and talk about it and nobody asks us a thing. I'm going to write that letter - how are you going to compensate those really fabulous teachers? How are you going to know who they are? I'm talking about my principal friends. They fell like they have to be in a classroom about 50 times a day. And as we all know you have the teacher who is a lousy teacher and maybe that person gets the bucks. How impractical is that. I don't know how they could ever do it (referring to a merit pay system). You know it's the bandwagon and the band that's has been worn out for me. It's disgusting - it really and truly is. I just don't get it. It's a bad economy and everybody's suffering, but number three on the hit parade is how lousy educational programs are. My kids would do really well, and they do really well - our whole school does really well- it's a good school with a good set up, but think how much more they could learn if we didn't have to sit around and test all day!

Researcher: How do you see the university classes and the practicum together?

Here's what I did when I was student teaching, we taught four and one-half days a week meaning we taught Monday through Friday midday until around lunch and then we went back to college. Then we had our practicum from 1:00-4:00 - I went to Cal-Poly. That was very helpful because you had your advisor and then you'd have five to six people that were in your advising group. I can't remember whether it was every Friday or every other Friday, so you half day to where you didn't feel like you were gone all the time. All we did when we went to school was to go to school and do our student teaching and do our little lesson plans. We didn't go to school except that Friday when we had our practicum, but in today's economy and you want to work and you want to support yourself and you're not living at home, you have to go to school at night or every other Saturday or something like that. I think there is a frustration and I think they all look at it differently. I've been really, really lucky - they've been fabulous young women - fabulous! They're approach is a practicality about it and when we sit back and talk about competitiveness in the profession, they see that when they go to their little classes and everyone says they're doing this and that. As practical person, you just say, are you kidding me? In a sense, that's what I hear them saying. There's no true honesty. They are not the ones who sit in front of the class, flashing a smile and whatever else, and trying to get by. They're adorable, they're hard working, they enjoy the job, and they'll be sticking to it for quite

some time, which is great and it's a vocation for them. I guess it's the human factor to be competitive - for some people that's just how they are. So they're not getting as much out of it. I often asked them what they think is best. Would you appreciate four teachers who are sort of simpatico to come in one night while you're student teaching - not your own student teachers but there are enough of us out there that could do this. This is something I would have died to have. While you're student teaching or during your first year of teaching while you're still having to make up those units, to have one of those classes where you have a group of master teachers and you could ask them pretty much anything you wanted and you'd get answers. Now, whether or not you like the answers you would leave with something to think about. That's the benefit of that class I had 150 years ago - that you had a few new teachers, a few middle of the road teachers, and a few teachers ready to retire that you may not have agreed with all of them and you may not have liked their approach, but you learned from it.

I see the written work they're given, and then it goes to [administrative assistant name]. The expectations are always changing - you add something then it gets taken away, but they do a very responsible job. It's something that is inherent with me where they have to write it down where I can say, oh yeah, that means this is what you're going to do. My lesson plans have a lot written on them, but if somebody walked in wanted to know what I was doing they'd be able to see all of the steps for their supervisor. I give them their mental cheat-sheet. I say you're going to teach this lesson, what are you going to do? And they say you're going to see this. Then I say, first of all it's a great idea, love that, love that, love that. But, you're going to get to two things out of your list. Don't be disappointed if you only do one out of those lists of five things. They're all good ideas. They're going to be looking for how you set up the thing and how you end it because those are the things they want to see. Those are the two big things - giving the expectations and reviewing what has been done is probably the most important thing that you can have in your lesson. The content is good, but we talk about that in their lesson planning. I still have trouble with scheduling. I have all this stuff I have to do and I'm circling my plans and moving it to different days and getting back to it next week and make sure I get the elements in. That is probably the biggest problem everybody has - you never get through the things you want to do. Scheduling is huge - it is huge. I tell parents - we have a lot of people tour in this school. People come into my room. They like to see at what I do because other people don't do that - what I do - where I have learning stations, the flow, I have four changes that go on in a particular time span. So they like to come in and see so I explain to them what's going on. Is it her week - if it is she gets to do it. That's okay she did it and did a good job. They all did it - it's different! It's hard to talk to parents so that's another thing so you pull them in to listen to you. What's the worst day of parent conferences - I have 10 on Thursday - check this out - see what we say so you learn - all of that exposure, exposure, exposure. The more you get the better it is because you remember. I always tell them - if you are having issues with anybody pull them in as fast as you possibly can and make sure there is somebody else sitting next to you while you do it. You want your sidekick - you don't want to be the Lone Ranger.

I have a crazy class this year. It's a class where parents email each other constantly. I find emails are the most impersonal thing in the world although I'm sure some people love it. I absolutely can't stand it because you can write anything you want in an email and no

matter what, it still sounds mean, sounds cold, sounds hard and impersonal. Some people also read a tone into it that isn't there or miss a tone that is there. So I'm spending a lot of time doing that. I've had to do a lot of writing and response. They see it all, they hear it all, they see it and learn how to do it all, and I hopefully they'll be able to carry it with them. I just think there's so much that is important - it is a big job. I also enrich my curriculum all of the time and she is learning a lot about that too. Parents want to know when they come in - do you teach this or do you teach that? Do you teach the curriculum? But, I'm going to tell you about the developmental stages of an eight and nine year old and this is what is going on in here. I am responsible for specific curriculum, but this is what I do. I make sure that they have the "have-to-knows" - anything else is just icing on the cake. This is what you need to know for the rest of your life - ironically most of this is taught in third grade. These nine topics are the things that you need to know to love math for the rest of your life.

That's the approach that you need to take when you're a new teacher- look at your curriculum. Is learning about such and such which is teeny tiny as important as teaching prefixes and suffixes and how to put endings on words because that is a spelling skill and a writing skill - so what are you going to do. Go through the curriculum and decide what is important to teach. I don't think in 34 years I've ever finished a book completely in my life, except for math when I did a really great math program where you basically developed your own language, but basically, no, I've never gone through every single page, through every single book that I've taught. If people tell you they have on a consistent basis - they're not telling you the truth - they're one of those suck-up people! There is just so much. That practical information that you just don't get unless somebody tells you that's done it before.

Anything else: No.

Interview ends.